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PREFACE

This study is based on twenty months' fieldwork among the Fort Jameson Ngoni of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland which I undertook during 1946–9 as a research officer of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute. I have already published a description of marital relations among these people as well as a general outline of their social organization. In this work I discuss their political system. I hope in a later publication to describe Ngoni village life.

The raw materials of the field anthropologist are the actions, sayings and writings of his informants, and I am deeply indebted to those many people who allowed me to make use of their knowledge and experience of Ngoni society and to join with them in their activities. It would be invidious to mention only some of the great number of people who helped me with my inquiries and I must content myself with this expression of gratitude and thanks to all who made my work possible. I hope that my writings do not betray their confidence or invade their privacy. I shall regard it as only a partial repayment of my debt to them if this book helps them and their neighbours to a better understanding of the world they live in.

I must, however, mention by name Paramount Chief Mpezeni Jere III, K.M., for the support which he gave my work in his country; and I have to thank Lomthunzi Cazingwa Nkhuwa, Councillor Zuwani Lukhezo Zulu III, and Mdani Kausha Tembo for the hospitality I enjoyed in their villages. M. B. Lukhero, my clerk throughout my stay in Ngoniland, introduced me to Ngoni ways of life and assisted me in my inquiries. This study is as much his as it is mine.

My fieldwork owes much to the co-operation and assistance given me by the Provincial Administration in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, by the missions and by planters and traders in the district. I am particularly indebted to Mr. D. B. Hall, District Commissioner, and Mrs. Hall for hospitality shown my family and myself, and it is a pleasure to recall the interest taken in my work by Mr. R. P. Bush, O.B.E., Secretary for African Affairs, and Mrs. Bush; Commander T. S. L. Fox-Pitt, O.B.E., R.N. (Retd.), Provincial Commissioner, and Mrs. Fox-Pitt; Mr. H. C. Bayldon, M.C., District Officer, and Mrs. Bayldon; Mr. H. J. Roberts, Provincial Education Officer, and Mrs. Roberts; Mr. M. K. Daka, Headmaster of the Ngoni Native Authority School; and in Nyasaland Mr. D. W. Saunders-Jones, O.B.E., Provincial Commissioner;

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Mr. M. N. Gandy, Assistant District Commissioner, and Mrs. Gandy. I received much assistance from The Rev. J. C. C. Pauw and The Rev. C. R. Kok, Dutch Reformed Church Mission; Mgr. Martin, Apostolic Prefect, and P. Kneer, White Fathers Mission; Miss A. S. Field, Universities' Mission to Central Africa; and Mr. Bambury, Seventh Day Adventist Mission. I am grateful to these and to many other friends for hospitality, information and encouragement, and for providing me with such pleasant interludes in the strenuous round of fieldwork.

I have written this book as a social anthropologist, and from an anthropological point of view. The kind of inquiry I made, and the way in which I have tried to handle my data, have been largely determined by the guidance and instruction I have been privileged to receive from many masters at Cambridge, Cape Town, Oxford and London. To the late Mr. J. H. Driberg, my first teacher, I am especially indebted. His stimulating manner encouraged his pupils to disagree with him, and his manifest love of his subject forced me to reject one of his main propositions, that no one should think of taking up anthropology as a career. I am also indebted to Dr. G. E. Daniel and Dr. J. C. Trevor for early encouragement. To Professors Schapera, Evans-Pritchard, Fortes and Radcliffe-Brown I owe my grounding in the problems and methods of anthropology, and I am very grateful to them for the help they have given in lecture and discussion.

This whole study has been carried out under the direction and supervision of Professor Gluckman, and my debt to him is writ large throughout this volume. His continuing encouragement, assistance and careful criticism have deeply affected my work. My colleagues of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute have also largely helped to shape this book. Dr. J. C. Mitchell has always been stimulating in our discussions on common problems, and I have been helped by discussion and argument with Dr. E. Colson and Dr. I. G. Cunnison. In the field I had the benefit of parallel data collected by my colleagues from other areas, and was fortunate in being able to visit some of them myself. My thinking and writing have been profoundly influenced by this experience of working in a group, in which each member had his own field background and his own point of view to justify to his colleagues. At the same time I am most grateful to the Trustees of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute for their financial support and for the freedom allowed me in my work.

In the field I was fortunate in collaborating with Mr. M. G. Marwick, Colonial Research Fellow, and Mrs. Marwick, whose

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work lay in my vicinity, and with Miss P. M. Deane, Colonial Research Fellow, who visited Ngoniland and who kindly placed her data at my disposal. Their researches threw much light on my own.

The literature on the Ngoni is considerable, and my work has been helped by the reports of earlier writers. Professor Read visited the Fort Jameson Ngoni in 1935, and those of my informants who had met her recalled her visit with great pleasure. I was often able to allay suspicion by explaining that I was trying to do the same kind of work as she had done earlier. In addition to published reports I have made considerable use of official dispatches and other archival material relating to the conquest of the Ngoni by the British in 1898.

For kind permission to quote from other works, I am indebted to the Oxford University Press and the International African Institute (in respect of *The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi* by Meyer Fortes), the Director of Agriculture, Northern Rhodesia Government (*The Soils, Vegetation and Agriculture of North-Eastern Rhodesia* by C. G. Trapnell), and The Editor, *Scottish Geographical Magazine* ('A Trip to Northern Angoniland', by H. Crawford Angus).

In preparing this book, I have to thank Miss D. Goldstein and Mr. J. Paing for help with diagrams and maps. Professors Schapera and Evans-Pritchard, Dr. Peristiany and Dr. Kaberry read the manuscript and I have been very grateful for their comments. Finally, I would thank my wife for companionship and assistance in the field, and for unremitting help in the arduous task of writing.

J. A. B.

Meling, Norway
1952

Postscript:

Since this book has gone to press, the British territories of Central Africa have been united in the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. This momentous step in the development of the region has been accompanied by a major shift in the balance of power between the Administration, the White settlers and the indigenous African population. I do not know in detail how the Ngoni people have responded to this change. Federation was a topic of conversation among them even while I was carrying out this study, and several Ngoni men have been prominent in the political negotiations of the last four years. It seems, therefore, highly likely that the operation of the political structure discussed in the last two chapters

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is limited by the fact that the Ngoni themselves were without writing, and their warlike disposition discouraged the visits of travellers who might otherwise have left some record of Ngoni life during those times. There is a considerable body of oral tradition which has been reduced to writing since 1891, but for the most part these traditional tales assume a knowlege of Ngoni life and do not explicitly describe it. Our evidence for the main features of Ngoni society during this period of migration is found in three places. First we have the pattern of relationships prevailing at the present time between groups of Ngoni, between villages, chiefdoms and kingdoms. The legends which form the charter of these relations form a coherent and largely consistent corpus of traditional knowledge about events taking place within the last hundred and fifty years from which we can make reliable inferences about the internal history of the Ngoni. In particular we can gain significant information about the manner in which different groups were formed by elucidating the names applied to them. A modified form of genealogical inquiry, applied not to physiological ancestry but to links between dependant and lord and between satellite and parent villages, provides us with a reasonably trustworthy history of inter-group relations.

Secondly, there is the evidence available from the numerous published accounts of Ngoni life which have been written by European and African authors. The traditions they record can be used to supplement the data gained from an analysis of present-day legends. A little information can be gleaned from the traditional histories of tribes attacked by the Ngoni.

Thirdly, we have a certain amount of comparative evidence from other societies. There are about a dozen distinct Ngoni kingdoms in different parts of Africa at the present time. In this book we are concerned directly with only one of these groups, now situated near Fort Jameson in Northern Rhodesia. Much light is, however, thrown on its history by accounts of other Ngoni States, particularly of the Ngoni of northern Nyasaland, where the old form of society persisted longer than at Fort Jameson and where even now the changes brought about by colonial rule seem not to be so great. Accounts of Ngoni groups farther afield, and of the allied societies of the Swazi and Zulu in South Africa provide less direct evidence.

A few isolated events in early Ngoni history can be dated precisely. Captain Cutfield, R.N., met a group of Ngoni on 7 November 1822 and some Ngoni warriors skirmished with the

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Portuguese at Delagoa Bay on 2 August 1823.[1] There was a solar eclipse on the day the Ngoni crossed the Zambezi, an event which may therefore be reliably dated 20 November 1835.[2] Livingstone and other explorers also provide us with dates. For example, Burton was in the vicinity when Ngoni raided Ujiji in 1858.[3] These evidences enable us to construct a comparatively good chronology for the Ngoni from 1821 onwards, but they do not directly tell us much about the form of Ngoni society.

Livingstone (1857, 1865, 1880), Cameron (1877) and Young (1877) mention the Ngoni under various names but tell us little except that the Ngoni were raiding continually. These early travellers were unable to make close contact with the Ngoni, mainly because of the unwillingness of their African carriers, and it is not until 1881 that the Fort Jameson Paramount Chief, Mpezeni, is mentioned by name, in Stewart's account. Wiese reached Mpezeni in 1886, or perhaps a few years earlier, and in 1891 he published the first detailed account of Zwangendaba's people. Other pre-conquest visitors to Mpezeni who published were Money and Smith (1897) and Deare (who did not publish until 1928), and Johnston's account (1897) is derived from them and from their contemporaries. Early accounts of tribal history were written by Laws (1893), Elmslie (1897), both of them missionaries with the Ngoni of northern Nyasaland, by Decle (1898), an explorer, and by Maples and other missionaries working near the Ngoni of Songea District, Tanganyika Territory, and northern Mozambique, who published in *Occasional papers for Nyasaland* (1893) and *The Nyasa News* (1893-5). There are many post-conquest accounts, the most important being those of Stigand (1907 and 1909), Nkonjera (1911-12), Stannus (1922), Young (1923 and 1932), Hodgson (1933), Poole (1934), Hatchell (1935 and 1948), Read (1936 onwards), Lancaster (1937), Winterbottom (1937 and 1950), Kapunzah (1941), Bruwer (1941) and Chibambo (1942). All these writers have in part drawn directly on oral tradition. Useful collations have been made by Werner (1906), Murray (1922), Abraham (1932), Bradley (1940) and Tew (1950). Bryant's masterly account of Zulu history (1929) contains in addition a

[1] Owen, *Narrative*, i, pp. 80, 121, 142*f*, 255, 258, 271. All citations will give abbreviated titles only of the works concerned, while full details of all works cited will be found in the bibliographies at the end of the volume.

[2] cf. Poole, 'Crossing of the Zambesi', pp. 290*ff*. Poole gives the date as 19 November. This seems to be based on a misinterpretation of the astronomical, as distinct from the civil, date. Young, *History*, p. 110, gives the date correctly. cf. *Nautical almanac*, 1835, 2nd ed., p. 470.

[3] Burton, *Lake regions*, ii, pp. 75*f*.

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second-hand account of the Ngoni, and some relevant information is given by Soga (1930).

Good accounts of pre-conquest social life are not so numerous. The most useful accounts are those of Wiese (1891 and 1900), Angus (1899), and Deare (1928), based on observations in the years immediately prior to the war of 1898. For the Ngoni of northern Nyasaland there are the works of Elmslie (1899) and Fraser (1901 and 1914). Read, in 1935, was the first to apply modern methods of inquiry and has published comparative material on the Ngoni of northern Nyasaland, Fort Jameson and southern Nyasaland, and on the neighbouring Cewa.

Some of this literature has found its way back to the Ngoni themselves, and children nowadays acquire their knowledge of the exploits of their ancestors as much from school books as from oral tradition. Under these circumstances, I decided that no useful purpose would be served by my trying to make conventional inquiries into tribal history with the aim of establishing what had in fact occurred in the past. I found it was impossible to tell whether similarity between an informant's account of a past event and a previously published version was due to common origin, independent invention, or good teaching in school. I was however concerned with the quite different problem of what use the Ngoni made of their history,[4] and I collected the histories of many counties, villages and people. For the material in this chapter I have therefore relied on the fullest and most lucid of these many versions of Ngoni history, that by Chibambo, an Ngoni of northern Nyasaland, supplemented by the writings of Poole, a member of the Administration at Fort Jameson for many years, and Lancaster, who was a game warden in the area.

2. *The Nguni background*

Before we can understand the Ngoni of central Africa we must first consider social conditions farther south, for it was from the south that many Ngoni came. From the sixteenth century onwards, south-eastern Africa was peopled by subsistence cultivators growing cereals and herding cattle. The Nguni, as the southernmost branch of these peoples is now called, occupied the area which has become Swaziland, Natal and the Transkei. At first the Nguni were not organized into powerful states but from the common background of Nguni society there developed, from the last quarter of the eighteenth century onwards, several strong political units. We may mention among others the Zulu empire under Shaka, the Swazi

[4] See my 'History in a changing society'.

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parts of the segment, namely segments 2, 3 and 19, survived as independent inferior segments within segment 1. The lieutenant in charge of the warriors spared the pregnant queen and hid her. She bore a son, Ntutu Mpezeni, and later was shown to Zwangendaba who received her kindly and, according to Chibambo, ordered her to live with her son in the headquarters of segment 1. She was not in charge of a bevy of wives, and as by this time the great wife was dead, the bevy in segment 3 now became Zwangendaba's senior bevy. Mwambera, eldest son of the leader of this bevy, was thus a candidate for the main heirship but owing to the disappearance of segment 18 and the subsequent reconciliation between Zwangendaba and Mpezeni's mother, the relative status of the two sons was uncertain. This uncertainty may have been one of the precipitating causes in the subsequent break-up of the State.

Rangeley's verson of this incident is that after he had been shown Mpezeni, Zwangendaba ordered the headquarters of segment 18 to be rebuilt. This seems less likely to be true than the version we have followed, since there is, as far as I know, no present-day village which we can identify as the headquarters of this segment.[20]

From Delagoa Bay, Zwangendaba went up the Limpopo Valley into Mashonaland. He fought with Kalanga and other Shona peoples and there was renewed fighting with other refugee groups under Soshangane and Nxaba. In 1835 Zwangendaba's group crossed over to the north side of the River Zambezi near Zumbo and settled in Nsenga country for four years. They moved on again along the eastern rim of the Luangwa basin and eventually arrived in about 1842 in Ufipa, on the east side of Lake Tanganyika. Here in about 1845 Zwangendaba died.

Two points of historical detail may be mentioned here. There is reliable evidence for a raid made on a Portuguese fort at Delagoa Bay on 22 October 1833 by some of Soshangane's people.[21] Poole and Winterbottom state explicitly that Zwangendaba's men also took part in this attack, and Lancaster seems to imply the same. According to the chronology adopted by Young and by Poole himself Zwangendaba was at this time four hundred and fifty miles away in the Kalanga country of Southern Rhodesia and it therefore seems unlikely, though not impossible, that he participated in this raid. Elmslie, Young and Chibambo do not mention it at all, and Bryant refers only to Soshangane's part in it.

A few years after Zwangendaba left Natal, he was followed by Mzilikazi, a chief who for a while fought under Shaka and then fled from him with his followers.

[20] Winterbottom, 'Angoni paramountcy', pp. 126*f*; Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, pp. 26*f*; Rangeley, 'Mtwalo', pp. 58*f*.

[21] Theal, *Portuguese in South Africa*, pp. 279*f*.

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They became known as the Rhodesian Ndebele or Matabele. Posselt, who worked among them, does not record in their history any fight with Zwangendaba, nor do Elmslie, Bryant, Young or Chibambo. Money and Smith say that it is a matter of doubt whether or not Zwangendaba met Mzilikazi. However, Wiese, who states that Zwangendaba broke away from Mzilikazi, says that there was a fight between them. Lancaster writes that there was a fight on the Transvaal border in 1828 before the raid of 1833. Poole makes this fight take place in about 1833 and writes of the Ngoni at that time living in the vicinity of modern Bulawayo and raiding Mzilikazi in the Transvaal. If we are to accept the existence of contact between Zwangendaba and Mzilikazi at all, either of these two versions is preferable to that of Winterbottom, who implies that after taking part in the 1833 raid at Delagoa Bay, Zwangendaba moved to the vicinity of Bulawayo where he met Mzilikazi, only to move on to the Zambezi in 1835. Winterbottom crowds into two years more marching and fighting than seems likely to have taken place. There is also conclusive evidence, set out by Posselt, that Mzilikazi did not leave the Transvaal under Boer pressure until about 1838.

If Zwangendaba and Mzilikazi were not living side by side, the suggestion by Lancaster and Winterbottom that they quarrelled about a dog is unlikely to be correct. There may be confusion here with the story, recorded by Field and Rangeley, of a quarrel between Mpezeni and Mwambera over their dogs.[22]

6. *Fission*

Various writers describe three occasions on which, according to their accounts, dissident sections broke off from the main body of Ngoni prior to Zwangendaba's death. Our view is that only one of these secessions actually took place, and that it was relatively unimportant.

The first allegedly dissident group is that sometimes known as the Maseko Ngoni, now dwelling in the region round Mount Domwe, on both sides of the border between southern Nyasaland and Portuguese East Africa. Murray, Young, Hatchell, Poole and Bruwer state that after crossing the River Zambezi together, the Ngoni of southern Nyasaland broke off from Zwangendaba while he was in Nsenga country. Laws, Johnson, Soga, Lancaster and Rangeley state that these Ngoni crossed the Zambezi separately from Zwangendaba. Elmslie says that they were not an offshoot of Zwangendaba's party, while Read, Chibambo and Winterbottom state that they broke away from Mzilikazi, not from Zwangendaba. Fraser mentions a group that remained behind when Zwangendaba crossed the river and says that it went on to the east of Lake Nyasa, but does not say that it later returned to southern Nyasaland. Of all these writers, Read has had most contact with the Ngoni of southern Nyasaland, and her account, as amplified by Winter-

[22] Poole, *Native tribes*, p. 5; Winterbottom, 'Outline histories', pp. 15*f*; Lancaster, 'Chronology', pp. 78, 85; Young, *History*, pp. 109*f*; Money and Smith, 'Explorations', p. 150; Posselt, *Fact and fiction*, p. 171, Field, *Visitiana*, pp. 16*f*; Rangeley, 'Mtwalo', p. 63.

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bottom, seems the most acceptable.[23] Two other versions of this alleged dissension can also be rejected. Bryant says that the southern Nyasaland Ngoni remained behind after the main body had crossed the river and that they were led by Gwasa (*sic*), Zwangendaba's principal headman. Stigand's account is similar, except that he says they broke off after crossing the river. This conflicts with the evidence of Young and Chibambo of the subsequent part played by Gwaza, first lieutenant in segment 1, with Zwangendaba's own group. We must also reject the contention of Coxhead and Hodgson that the southern Nyasaland group broke away from the main body of Ngoni after Zwangendaba's death in Tanganyika Territory. The statement made by Stanley and followed by numerous other writers that the Hehe are an Ngoni group is quite without foundation.[24] Some other communities in southern Tanganyika who were merely raided by Ngoni have themselves taken the name Ngoni or some other name used by Ngoni.[25]

Poole speaks in one place of 'the secession of Nquaba' (Nxaba) from Zwangendaba, but this does not tally with his earlier statements that Nxaba's migration was independent of Zwangendaba, and that the first secession from Zwangendaba's host was that of the southern Nyasaland Ngoni. Bryant's account of Nxaba is much fuller than Poole's, and contradicts Poole's suggestion that Nxaba crossed the Zambezi at the Lupata Gorge. According to Bryant, Nxaba's group never formed part of Zwangendaba's following, and Nxaba was eventually killed in Barotseland. Chibambo and Winterbottom support Bryant.[26]

Posselt, who worked among Mzilikazi's people, states that a section of Zwangendaba's group, composed of Swazi, broke off at about the time of the Zambezi crossing and turned back to join Mzilikazi who married the woman who led the dissident section.

[23] The secession of the southern Nyasaland Ngoni from Mzilikazi may explain Wiese's and Decle's assertions that Zwangendaba himself broke away from Mzilikazi. Wiese, 'Expedição', p. 466; Decle, *Savage Africa*, p. 151.

[24] Murray, *Handbook*, p. 30; Young, *History*, p. 111, and letter in *African Studies*, 1950; Hatchell, 'Angoni' (1935), p. 69; Poole, *Native tribes*, p. 7; Bruwer, *Mbiri*, p. 11; Laws, p. 85, f.n.1, in Lugard, *East African Empire*, i; Johnson, *Nyasa*, p. 102; Soga, *South-Eastern Bantu*, p. 275; Lancaster, 'Chronology', pp. 78, 85; Elmslie, *Introductory Grammar*, p. x; Read, 'Tradition', p. 464; Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, p. 31; Winterbottom, 'Histories', p. 16; Fraser, *Primitive people*, pp. 312*f*; Bryant, *Olden times*, p. 465; Stigand, 'Natives', p. 126; Coxhead, *Native tribes*, p. 20; Hodgson, 'Dowa District', p. 128; Stanley, *Dark Continent*, i, pp. 499, 503; Rangeley, 'Mtwalo', pp. 56, 62.

[25] Maples, *Journals*, p. 15; Weule, *Native Life*, p. 339.

[26] Poole, *Native tribes*, pp. 7 and 6; Bryant, *Olden times*, pp. 277, 279, 454, 460*f*, 471*f*; Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, p. 16; Winterbottom, 'Outline histories', p. 16.

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This story is followed by Bryant but does not occur in any accounts collected from Ngoni themselves. It seems probable therefore that this seceding section was not numerous or important.[17]

There are no other disruptions mentioned in the literature, and it seems probable therefore that until the death of Zwangendaba, the State remained largely intact. However the process, common in Bantu Africa, by which rival claimants to a throne succeed only in dividing their kingdom, operated with striking effect as soon as the founder of the State was buried. The elimination of segment 18 has sometimes been suggested as the reason why the State broke up, but it is clear from comparative considerations that a State of this kind was likely at any time to break into a number of independent groups, and that this tendency was greatest at the death or senescence of the king.

About 1840 a number of important people, mainly coming from south of the Zambezi, were killed off as a result of an internal struggle for power in which it appears that the recently captured Tumbuka, who were successful witch-finders, were allied with the Swazi and other Ndandwe against the Tsonga from the Delagoa Bay region.[18] Unfortunately there is very little information available on the relationship of this struggle to the rest of the political system. It is, however, clear that the effect of killing off a large number of Ngoni of Tsonga origin was insufficient to prevent the State breaking up a few years later.

When Zwangendaba died, his sons were still young and, for the time being, effective leadership of the State was disputed between men of his own generation whose positions are shown in Diagram 2. His brothers, the lords of segments 5 and 6, were already dead. Fraser describes the dispute as a struggle between Ntabeni's children and Mgayi. Ntabeni was a younger brother of Zwangendaba and the lord of segment 7 while Mgayi was Zwangendaba's father's younger brother's son who, on Chibambo's evidence, represented the interests of the residue of segment 1. Rangeley has a slightly different version and makes Mgayi a supporter of segment 4. Poole, presumably following Fraser, says with some qualification that Ntabeni and Mgayi both claimed the chieftainship. From what we know of the south-eastern Bantu, and from our knowledge of present-day Ngoni, it seems unlikely that a brother would claim to be the legitimate heir in preference to a son, however much he might strive to gain ascendancy over the son. It seems preferable to follow Young and Chibambo in regarding Ntabeni and Mgayi

[17] Posselt, *Fact and fiction*, pp. 146-7, 176; Bryant, *Olden times*, pp. 464 *f.*
[18] See p. 87.

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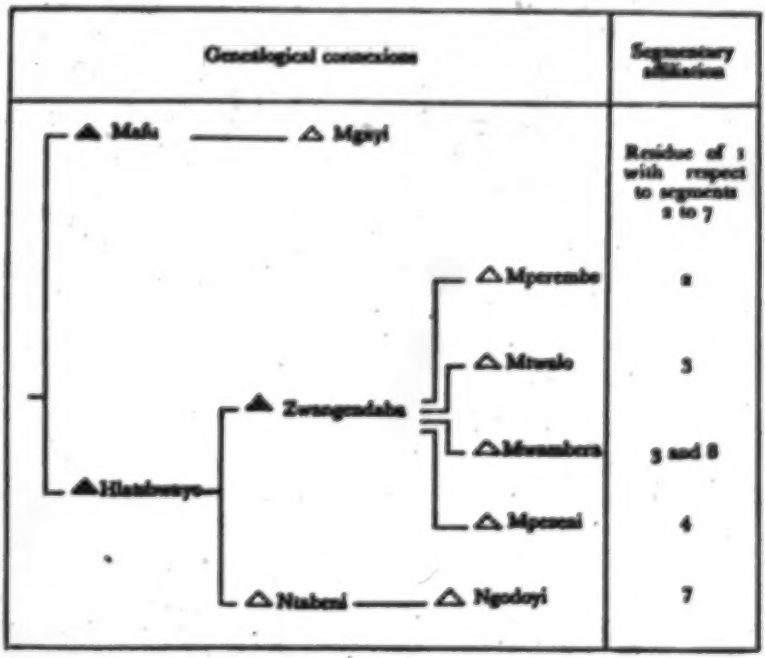
as acting as regent in turn on behalf of the young sons of Zwangendaba.[19]

The various published accounts of the succession differ from one another and reflect the different interpretations put upon the same event by rival sections of the tribe. Fraser and Young, who

DIAGRAM 2. ZWANGENDABA AND HIS HEIRS



worked in northern Nyasaland, say that Zwangendaba chose Mwambera of segment 3 as his heir, and Elmslie says that Mpezeni and others were under Mwambera. From Fort Jameson, Lancaster says that Zwangendaba chose Mpezeni, formerly of segment 18, and Poole, who is supported by Murray, says he nominated Mtwalo, another son in segment 3. Read, who worked in both areas, states

[19] For Mgayi's position in the residential system, we have only Chibambo's remark, 'the regent being Mgayi Jere, the father of Mtenje, of Elangeni', to be compared with Young's and Rangeley's mention of Emankechezeni (Emacakazeni) as the village of Mgayi. Rangeley also implies that Mgayi was Zwangendaba's brother's son, which is unlikely. Fraser, *Primitive people*, p. 313; Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, pp. 27*ff*; Poole, *Native tribes*, p. 71; Young, *History*, pp. 115*ff*; Rangeley, 'Mtwalo', p. 60.

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that 'the history of those years, as related to-day, is largely concerned with proving in each area that their Paramount is the only rightful one'.[30] It is not our task to decide between these conflicting stories. What is important for our purposes is firstly that there was a disputed succession, and secondly that present-day rival groups are still concerned each to show that its claimant was the legitimate heir.

Chibambo, who belongs to northern Nyasaland, has a different version. He states that Zwangendaba chose as his heir his younger brother's eldest son Ngodoyi, in segment 7. Such a succession would have been unusual, for Ngodoyi's father, Ntabeni, was still alive, and Chibambo does not discuss why Zwangendaba should have passed over all his own sons. Nor does Chibambo explain why Ntabeni, as regent, should have supported the claims of Zwangendaba's sons as against those of his own son Ngodoyi, for according to his account the regent declared that Mpezeni was the rightful heir. The lady of segment 3 had earlier quarrelled with the regent, lord of segment 7,[31] and now to spite her he declared that the next in succession after Mpezeni was not her eldest son Mwambera but Mtwalo, the eldest son of one of her subordinate co-wives.[32] Chibambo suggests that it was this quarrel which led the regent to support Mpezeni as against the legitimate claims of segment 3.

The regent established a new segment 4, Mtenguleni, for Mpezeni and his mother, and within segment 3 formed a separate segment 8, Emchakachakeni or Ecigodhlweni, for Mwambera and his mother, thus leaving Mtwalo and his mother in the headquarters of segment 3.

Chibambo states that Gwaza Jere, senior lieutenant of segment 1, supported the regent when he selected Mpezeni as Zwangendaba's heir, while Young says he strongly opposed it; both writers agree that after Mpezeni had been chosen there was a quarrel between the regent and the headquarters of segment 1.[33] Ntabeni, the regent, died shortly afterwards and his segment 7 broke off from the rest of the group. They were pursued by a party from segment 1 headquarters, but made their escape. The regentship now passed

[30] Fraser, loc. cit.; Young, loc. cit.; Elmslie, *Wild Ngoni*, p. 27; Lancaster, 'Chronology', p. 78; Poole, *Native tribes*, p. 8; Murray, *Handbook*, pp. 29*f*; Read, 'Tradition and prestige', p. 464. cf. Winterbottom, 'Outline histories', p. 17.

[31] Bruwer, *Mbiri*, p. 12; Rangeley, 'Mtwalo', p. 60.

[32] A linked co-wife, according to Winterbottom. However, his name for Mwambera's mother differs from that given by Chibambo, who merely says that the two wives were sisters. Winterbottom, 'Angoni paramountcy', p. 126; Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, p. 16.

[33] cf. *Occasional papers for Nyasaland*, 2, pp. 24-5.

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to Zwangendaba's father's brother's son Mgayi, of the residue of segment 1.

Elmslie states that Ntabeni's people, i.e. those of segment 7, went northward on the west side of Tanganyika and he is followed in this by Murray, Bryant and Tew. Elmslie bases his statement on Stewart, who heard of them there in 1879. However, Stewart did not visit the west side of Lake Tanganyika himself, and merely gathered his information from people in a Mambwe village on his way to the lake in October 1879. The account of the Ngoni that they gave him was incorrect in a number of particulars, and we have, therefore, to treat with caution their statement about the existence of an Ngoni group west of Lake Tanganyika. Even if part of this segment did settle there, it is certain that the whole of segment 7 did not. Hatchell gives genealogical information for the group of Ngoni at present near Runsewe, Kahama District, Tanganyika Territory, which links them to Ntabeni and segment 7. Stanley describes an Ngoni group which attacked Ujiji and was allied to Mirambo, and in the light of Hatchell's account it is certain that Stanley is here referring to part, if not the whole, of segment 7. This interpretation is made by Fraser, and is in accord with Young and Chibambo. Hence we may conclude that the main body of segment 7 went north on the east side of Lake Tanganyika and eventually settled in Kahama District.

Part of segment 7 may have split off and gone elsewhere, possibly to the west of the lake. Hatchell, in his account of the Kahama group, does not mention Ngodoyi, son of Ntabeni, and it is possible that he may have led a group elsewhere although Rangeley states that it was his following that reached Kahama. Hatchell and Winterbottom write of an abortive expedition by Zwangendaba to the western shores of Lake Tanganyika but make no mention of a group remaining there.

This interpretation conflicts with Elmslie, who says that segment 7 was west of the lake while the group encountered by Stanley were a separate group led by Ntutu. Elmslie does not say who Ntutu was, but it is clear from the context that he does not refer to Ntutu Mpezeni. Hatchell does not mention the name Ntutu in his genealogies. Elmslie may, therefore, have been misled on this point.

The only other writer to mention a group west of the lake is Poole, who says that Ntabeni settled west of the lake in Nyamwezi country, where they were known as Watuta, and, co-operating with the Ruga-Ruga, were encountered by Livingstone and Stanley in 1871. Since in 1871 Livingstone, Stanley, the Ruga-Ruga, and the main body of Nyamwezi were all east of the lake, it appears that Poole intended to write 'east', not 'west'.

Colle refers to contact between the Ngoni and Luba, but the section of Luba with whom the Ngoni fought had crossed from the Congo to the east side of Lake Tanganyika before encountering the Ngoni. The existence of an Ngoni group on the west side of Lake Tanganyika seems therefore to be doubtful.[84]

Fraser says that Mgayi led the main body, including Mpezeni, Mwambera, and Mperembe, as far north as Victoria Nyanza. Finding the country poor, he led them back towards Sukuma country, but died on the way. Fraser is followed by Poole, Soga and Winterbottom. It is perhaps significant that Fraser does not

[84] Elmslie, *Wild Ngoni*, pp. 25-7; Murray, *Handbook*, p. 29; Bryant, *Olden times*, p. 468; Tew, *Lake Nyasa*, p. 94; Stewart, 'Lake Nyassa', p. 268; Poole, *Native tribes*, p. 7; Hatchell, 'Tanganyika territory' (1935), pp. 69*f*; Stanley, *Dark Continent*, i, p. 499; Fraser, *Primitive people*, p. 313; Young, *History*, p. 115; Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, p. 29; Colle, *Baluba*, p. 65; Rangeley, 'Mtwalo', p. 62.

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Mpezeni

mention Ntabeni's group as reaching Victoria Nyanza, and it may be that he has merely attributed this exploit to the wrong group. Such an interpretation would be in accord with the accounts of Elmslie, Young, Chibambo and Rangeley, and following them, Bryant and Tew. All these writers imply that the main body of Ngoni did not go farther north than Ufipa. It also provides a more reasonable chronology, for by Fraser's version we have to assume that within only about five years the main body of Ngoni traversed Tanganyika Territory from south to north and then back again. Lancaster is inconclusive on this point.[86]

7. *Mpezeni's kingdom*

Mgayi did not live long as regent and after his death the senior lieutenant of segment 1 made Mpezeni chief. There was a considerable shortage of food at the time and this, combined with dissension in the tribe about the succession, appears to have precipitated a further split. A follower of Zwangendaba called Zulu Gama, whose position in the segmentary organization seems not to have been recorded, led his segment off to the east, where in the vicinity of Songea he met with that group of Maseko Ngoni which we have mentioned earlier, and who probably broke off from the Ndebele some time prior to 1835. For a while the two groups operated as one but soon they split apart. Some people stayed on in Songea District, others went south and eventually rounded the southern end of Lake Nyasa to arrive in the Dedza District of southern Nyasaland, where they remain to-day.

Of those that remained behind under Mpezeni, the principal cleavage was between segments 2, 4, 5 and 6, all led by Mpezeni, on the one side and segment 3 with the headquarters of segment 1 on the other. Led by the senior lieutenant of segment 1, the latter group moved off to the south-east while Mpezeni moved west. While in the country of the Bisa, segment 2 broke off from Mpezeni and after settling for a while in Bemba country as an independent group it eventually went back to join segment 3. Mpezeni, with segments 4, 5 and 6, went south and eventually arrived in Fort Jameson District. His leadership of these segments seems not to have been questioned, but in the other group the senior lieutenant of segment 1 at first supported the headquarters of segment 3 against the claims to the chieftainship made by segment 8. Mtwalo, the son of Zwangendaba who had been put in charge of the headquarters of segment 3, protested, however, that the real head of that segment was Mwambera, head of segment 8, who thus became chief.

[86] Fraser, *Primitive people*, p. 313; Soga, *South-Eastern Bantu*, p. 274; Poole, *Native tribes*, p. 7; Winterbottom, 'Outline histories', p. 18; Elmslie, *Wild Ngoni*, p. 27; Young, *History*, pp. 115*f*; Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, pp. 29*ff*; Bryant, *Olden times*, p. 467; Tew, *Lake Nyasa*, p. 94; Lancaster, 'Chronology', p. 86; Rangeley, 'Mtwalo', p. 63.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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could assemble for hunting and fighting, similar to the sectors attached to chiefly villages among the Zulu.[8]

Women were organized into parallel age-sets, led by daughters of the royal line and other important young women. Men and women of corresponding sets danced together on ceremonial occasions, and among themselves women in a regiment used to fight 'to see who was strongest'. After marriage a woman ceased to participate actively in these regimental dances and fights.

The most important national festival was the first fruits ceremony held annually at the headquarters of Zwangendaba's great wife's segment. This was organized on an age-set basis, and there was much competitive dancing. Special songs were sung, and on conclusion of the ceremony a large national raid might be undertaken.

The Ngoni depended largely on the efficiency of their army for the continual inflow of captives on which the strength and continued existence of the State depended. The age-set system provided them with an efficient army, and in addition was a means whereby the centrifugal tendency inherent in their segmentary system was partly checked.

Each major segment had members in each regiment, and each regiment was drawn from every major segment. It provided the central authority with an instrument by which the segments could be held together, for on national raids the young men of every segment were in danger. No one segment, save the State itself, could claim the glory for a successful battle, but only the regiments involved. The Paramount Chief did not possess a complete monopoly of force, for we have already noted that sometimes segment heads organized their own raids. But these were small affairs,

[8] cf. Gluckman, 'Kingdom of the Zulu', p. 31.

(a) Mpezeni I's regiment. Lancaster says Mpezeni I was in Mayunge.
(b) Nsingu's regiment.
(c) Mpezeni II's regiment.
(d) Maola. Wiese and some of my informants support the earlier position; Lancaster and other of my informants support the later one.
(e) Maiyiza. Lancaster and one of my informants support the earlier position; a more reliable informant supports the later one.

Wiese gives two other regimental names. His Madouda or Madoda is merely the status term *madoda*, meaning 'mature, respected and important men'. His other regimental name, Madginga or Madjinga, is probably also a status term, meaning 'very old men'. Rangeley has the names Tatakakulu, Mang'ombe, Izimpisi, Makeke, Mahacu, Zimfezi, Manyoni.

Sources: twenty-three independent informants, offering partly conflicting accounts; Wiese, 'Expedição', p. 477, and 'Geschichte', p. 195; Lancaster, 'Chronology', p. 82; Rangeley, 'Mtwalo', p. 59.

[Footnotes pertain to Table III, page 38.—Analyst]

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power. The history of the State and indeed of each subdivision within it was encapsulated in the formal relations between royal headquarters and between segments. Yet the system was always growing and every few years brought a new royal capital, a new chief, new headquarters for the heirs of large segments and new ambitious men as lieutenants. Each generation also brought greater divergence of interest between the constituent parts of each segment and of the State, as we shall discuss later. Before going on to examine the conditions under which the State split we shall turn aside to compare the Ngoni residential system with similar social structures found in some other societies.

4. *Continually segmenting systems*

Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, in their *African Political Systems*, have provided us with a solid foundation for a typology of political systems in simple societies. It is therefore appropriate to consider what place the Ngoni State has in this typology. The authors distinguish three types of political system in Africa,[34] and we shall attempt to determine to which of these the Ngoni State belongs.

Their first type includes those small societies in which everyone is kin to everyone else, and in which political relations are coterminous with kinship relations. It is clear that Ngoni society was not of this kind.

The other two types are those referred to as primitive states, or Group A, and stateless societies, or Group B. Primitive states are characterized by the presence of organized government, i.e. centralized authority, administrative machinery and judicial institutions, and of cleavages of wealth, privilege and status corresponding to the distribution of power and authority. In stateless societies there is no government, in this sense, and political relations are primarily regulated by a segmentary system of permanent unilateral descent groups.

This classification is sometimes taken to imply that segmentary systems are found only in stateless societies but not in primitive states. This implication does not follow inevitably from the scheme of classification, though it is compatible with it. It is, however, easy to assume that this implication is intended, for the authors frequently use the adjective segmentary to characterize stateless societies in contrast to primitive states. This implication is false, as can be shown by reference to a number of societies, and cannot have been intended by the authors, for elsewhere Fortes has written that 'It

[34] Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, *African Political Systems*, pp. 6*f*.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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114 is quite possible for the sub-divisions of a centralized state to have
121 a segmentary social organization'.[35]

This unfortunate muddle is not helped by the use of the adjective pyramidal to characterize the social organization of primitive states, for when we need a visual symbol for a segmentary system as found in stateless societies, we use a triangle or pyramid.[36] There is, on reflection, an obvious difference between one office-holder having authority over a number of subordinates and one segment containing lesser segments within itself; but this difference is obscured by the similarities of spatial metaphor.

Under these circumstances, it seems best to eschew the use of pyramidal or segmentary as unqualified descriptions of either group of societies, and to follow the authors' alternative suggestion by speaking of Group A societies as primitive states, and of those in Group B as stateless societies. The presence or absence of a segmentary political system may now be handled as a separate question, providing a classification cutting across the division into states and stateless societies.

642 We have spoken throughout this chapter of Ngoni society as a
[643] state, and this usage is in accord with the definition of a state given
[622] here. The Paramount Chief with his lieutenants exercised supreme authority, there was a highly organized administrative machine, and there was an organized method of settling disputes within the
[556] State. There were only slight variations in wealth except in the
[554] control of cattle, but privilege and status were expressed in the residential system and were inseparable from the exercise of power and authority.

121 The presence or absence of a segmentary political system can
631 itself be divided into two questions; was there a segmentary system, and if so, was it the political system? If we have used the term segment correctly, then it is clear that the Ngoni did have a segmentary system, and that political relations within, but not without, the State were largely regulated by it. However, when Fortes and Evans-Pritchard use this word segmentary in their typology they are referring exclusively to lineage segments, or to major groups very similar in form to lineages. A segment of the Ngoni residential system was not quite the same as a segment of a lineage, and we must therefore examine what may usefully be meant by the term segmentary as applied to a social system before we can answer these questions.

[35] Fortes, *Dynamics*, p. 234.

[36] e.g. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*, p. 201, and Fortes, *Dynamics*, p. 34, diagrams.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

Chapter Three

DEFEAT

1. Structural change 2. Portugal or Britain 3. Concession hunters 4. European consolidation 5. Friction 6. Fighting 7. Cattle 8. The end of a system

1. *Structural change*

178 619 64 THE STRUGGLES of the Ngoni during the middle of the nineteenth century were with groups of roughly the same character as themselves. The processes at work in the Ngoni social system were in the main repetitive. The State grew in size, split, and grew again, but it was still largely the same kind of State as before. Even though there were important differences between the Ngoni and their opponents, particularly after 1835, those whom they encountered were sufficiently like themselves to be absorbed into the system without difficulty. In the nomenclature of Radcliffe-Brown and the Wilsons, there was social circulation in the Ngoni State but little change in its structural form.[1] For this reason we have been concerned in our analysis so far with but few of the historical details of that period, and have dealt with history only in an abstract and generalized form. Many of the inconsistencies between various versions of the tribal legend have not been [114] significant. For example, Chief Ciwele Ndhlovu of Dowa broke off from the main body of Ngoni, according to some writers before, and according to others after, the split between Mpezeni and Mwambera.[2] It does not matter for our particular purpose which of these versions is correct, for we are here concerned only to establish that from time to time senior lieutenants did split off with their segments to form independent chiefdoms. This process, of which Ciwele's secession is an example, was essentially the same before and after the Mpezeni-Mwambera split.

648 178 12 After 1880 Ngoni history entered a new phase, and social processes began to operate which were not repetitive. Changes began to occur in the form of the Ngoni social field, for instead of interacting with groups similar to themselves, the Ngoni became involved in a much wider network of social relations. This change

[1] Radcliffe-Brown, 'On social structure', p. 4; Wilson, *Social change*, p. 58.
[2] cf. Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, pp. 32-3; Winterbottom, 'Histories', p. 18; Wiese, 'Geschichte', p. 186.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

557 This process was facilitated by the actions of some heads of major
648 segments. It had always been correct procedure for one important person to deal with another through intermediaries, at least in the
[624] opening stages of negotiation, so that lieutenants and others were frequently sent as ambassadors for their lords to the headquarters of other major segments. There was particular point in adopting this procedure in dealing with the Administration since its demands on a man sent to it were unpredictable and apt to be onerous. Thus in many instances a lieutenant or other dependant was presented to the Administration as the headman of an area or a group of villages. This nominee was regarded by the Administration as the rightful leader of the area concerned, a belief often fostered by the nominee himself. In this way effective control of an area passed from the head of a segment to one of his dependants.

Unfortunately, few records of the early administrative arrange-
648 ments have survived. From 1883, when a British consul was first
● 114 appointed to Nyasaland, down to the defeat of the Ngoni in 1898, the doings of the tribe were of political significance to Britain, and were reported on at length in dispatches which are now public records. After 1898, events of similar importance within the tribe to those that had been reported earlier, the death of this lieutenant or the movement of that village from one site to another, were no longer of any interest to Whitehall or even to the Directors of the British South Africa Company. Thus there was a drastic reduction in the scale of reporting. At the same time the loss of sovereignty, of independent action, involved a reduction in the kind of events which were likely to be recorded. The Ngoni no longer made war or sold slaves. They did pay tax and work in the mines, but this they did not as an independent tribe but as part of Fort Jameson District and the Eastern Province, and such records as there are relate to these administrative units rather than to specific tribes. The B.S.A.
[439] Company lacked the long tradition of administration enjoyed by the Foreign Office and Colonial Office, and its reports were scanty by comparison. Thus the only published report of any kind on affairs in North-Eastern Rhodesia for the year 1905-6 is a mere fifteen lines long, and there is only one sentence on African administration: 'The conduct of the Natives has continued to be satisfactory.'[18] It is not until 1928 that annual reports on African affairs began to be published. Our account of Ngoni history from 1898 until recent times therefore cannot be as complete as we would wish.

[18] *Directors' Report and Accounts*, 1906, p. 7.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

Ngoni tradition placed the departure of the two main groups under the leadership of Zwangendaba Jere and Ngwana Maseko during Shaka's wars, according to some traditions just before, and to others just after, the death of Zwide, ruler of the Ndwandwe people. The separate departure of the two Ngoni groups which later formed the two kingdoms was determined partly by their separate leadership under the Jere and Maseko clans, partly by their march by different routes to the Zambesi and after crossing it; and partly by the clan descent names of the Swazi element in the two kingdoms, which with few exceptions were different.

Two traditional songs, sung at marriages, at dances at the Paramounts' villages, and the first in the church of the Scottish mission at Ekwendeni in north Nyasaland, reminded the Ngoni of their departure from Natal, of their separation from the Ndwandwe people under Zwide, and of the hazards of a small military band fighting its way northwards.

All the nations
Are gathered together against us.
How shall we fight?
They are called together against us.
Whence shall we summon help?
The big husky ones, ho!
They are called together against us.
We are reinforced by whom?

It is because of Zwide, chief of the Ndwandwe people
That though I lie down I cannot sleep.
O Zwide, chief of the Ndwandwe people!
Though I lie down I cannot sleep.
Shaka scatters us among the forests of Soshangane land.

There were several informants in both Ngoni kingdoms who had preserved the story of the departure of the Ngoni from the south. Y. M. Cibambo in his book gathered together the traditions and gave what he considered the most authentic version of the departure. One text from the northern kingdom is given here, partly because it was typical of the kind of material Cibambo had to work on, and also because the author, Mlonyeni Jere, had heard it from his mother who, as a young girl, had lived at the court of Zwangendaba. The text gives the genealogy of Zwangendaba, and the connexion of his line with Zwide, ruler of the Ndwandwe people. It emphasizes the immediate cause of Zwangendaba's departure—namely the fear of meeting Shaka and his warriors in open battle, and the fact that he was not called a chief until he had made a breach with Zwide. The summons to the mourning for his uncle Mafu, which he ignored, was considered by the Ngoni to be the final act by which Zwangendaba cut himself off from

173 Ntabeni had his own village named Engwenyameni, and the big village of Zwangendaba was called Elangeni, and there were others.

When Zwangendaba left with his brother Ntabeni, they built their village near a path. That was the time that he departed from Zwide and he was at this time called a chief and had his own people. When Zwide was running away, Zwangendaba was on the way, and he was building his villages and spent a year at one place, and sometimes more than a year.

[114] The following text on the departure of the central Ngoni from the south was written by Ishmael Mwale, the treasurer of Paramount Gomani II of the central Ngoni kingdom. As Cibambo had done in the north, he had collected and put together the oral traditions of the old men. This story also began with a flight from Shaka's army by two leaders, Nqaba (spelt by Bryant, Nxaba) of the Msane people and Ngwana of the Maseko people. They fought the Ngoni group led by the Jere clan, and the group under Gaza which were later called the Shangaan people, and were defeated by both. The tradition of crossing the Zambesi by dividing the waters with a stick was common to the northern and central Ngoni. After crossing the Zambesi, the central Ngoni went west of the Shire river to the Kirk Range on the eastern slopes of which they found the people called Ntumba.

The Departure of Ngwana from Swaziland
by Ishmael Mwale

¶ Nqaba, son of Mbekani, made war on Shaka, but was defeated and retreated to Swaziland. Then Ngwana said 'If you run away from Shaka, he will trouble us, so I am going to leave.' Chief Nyathi told Shaka that Ngwana was leaving, and Shaka said: 'Prevent him from leaving.' So Nyathi fought Ngwana and Ngwana knew that he was waiting for Shaka's army. So he performed a rite, and caused rain to come and darkness. In the middle of the darkness Ngwana left together with Nqaba. They came to the country of Nancekwani at Mauwa, and fought with the people. They defeated the four chiefs there and conquered the country. Ngwana went straight to Ulozi to the village of Mamba, father of Lewanika. He destroyed the country of the Lozi and died there. Magadlela his brother entered the chieftainship. When Magadlela left Ulozi he went to the country of Ndunduwali, and from there to the Nyika. He arrived at Cidima Mbirasweswe, and there Zwangendaba found them. There was fighting between Magadlela and Zwangendaba, and many people were killed and they did not know who they were because it was night. When Magadlela ran away he made for Golongozi where Nqaba was, and explained to him about the war. They mobilized the army to follow Zwangendaba. When they found him they destroyed many of his men. Somfuya and other brothers of Zwangendaba were killed. When they returned from the war with Zwangendaba they went to Cikwanda. There they found Gaza and fought him and were defeated. Magadlela and Nqaba ran away. Nqaba took a friendly farewell of Magadlela because there was hunger and there were many people without food. Magadlela allowed him

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

(35,107). It is difficult not to assume that many Nyanja had formerly called themselves Ngoni.

Table II

	1926	1931	1945
Mzimba district			
Ngoni	25,484	24,627	44,948
Tumbuka	46,029	78,483	89,135
Cewa	14,041	2,411	21,891
Yao	20	—	—
Tonga	3,052	605	32
Nkonde	141	—	—
Others	334	156	202
Total	89,101	106,282	156,208
Ncheu district			
Ngoni	64,023	46,308	15,242
Cewa	11	4,372	2,815
Nyanja	334	25,393	60,400
Cikunda	360	940	1,336
Yao	203	1,064	3,267
Nguru, etc.	—	—	4,448
Others	13	278	182
Total	64,944	78,355	87,690

Since the two Ngoni kingdoms are the subject of this book and not the secession states, the position of the rulers of those states as Native Authorities and the circumstances of their secession from the two main groups will not be examined here. The three secession states in the north were under Chiefs Ciwere and Msakambewa in Dowa district and Jere in Kotakota district. The four connected formerly with the central Ngoni were under Chiefs Kacere and Kacindamoto in Dedza, Masula in Lilongwe and Vumbwe in Cholo.

In the 1930's, when I was living sometimes in the northern kingdom, sometimes in the central, and for a time in the Ngoni state under Chief Jere, I was aware that the existence of the two kingdoms and of the seven secession states did not preclude a great deal of contact between the Ngoni of the different areas. The stream of travel in Nyasaland from south to north and from north to south along the one trunk road, brought Ngoni as visitors from one kingdom to the other, from the smaller states to both kingdoms, and from 'the Ngoni of the dispersion' living in towns to visit their relatives and friends in the Ngoni kingdoms and states. These visits might be social, to see parents or to marry a wife; they might be for economic purposes, to invest in or sell cattle, to supervise cotton or tobacco marketing; or they might be for ritual purposes such as mourning. When I travelled in the central Ngoni kingdom in 1936 with Y. M. Cibambo, the historian of the northern

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5
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Tumbuka FR6

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leave after meeting, withdrawing after a case in court, and initiating or concluding many other formal or less formal occasions. Children were taught to use the correct expressions and rebuked if they made a mistake, and it was one of the requirements in Ngoni families that a uniform standard of verbal politeness should accompany correct behaviour in posture.

CULTURAL AFFINITIES AND DIFFERENCES

N M 121 122

The anthropologist working in Nyasaland is aware of the problems inherent in any attempt to isolate cultural features within any of the larger ethnic groups found there. There were no ethnographic field studies published of any of the other ethnic groups when I was working among the Ngoni. Mary Tew, in *Peoples of the Lake Nyasa Region*,[1] referred to scattered sources published before 1939, to which I had access; and from time to time Cewa informants wrote accounts of particular social institutions or ritual, from which I was able to make certain comparisons with Ngoni ritual and institutions. Some of the earlier accounts, such as that by Hodgson on the Cewa and Ngoni in the Dowa district,[2] assumed that all the cultural changes and 'borrowings' had been by the Ngoni from their Cewa neighbours, whereas I found in that area in 1939 Cewa villages where Ngoni cultural elements had been adopted.

N M 114 177

N M T 105

Ngoni cultural affinities with South-eastern Bantu	*Local tribal differences*
Paramount and subordinate chiefs	Chiefs; no central authority except in Henga and Ngonde
Patrilineal descent Virilocal residence Marriage by *lobola*	Cewa and southern Tumbuka: Matrilineal descent, uxorilocal residence, marriage witnesses Henga: Patrilineal descent and virilocal residence
Clan exogamy „ hierarchy Houses Age sets	Cewa: No clan exogamy „ „ hierarchy *Mbumba* group Girls' initiation schools
Cattle complex Ancestor cult associated with cattle	Tumbuka Cewa in Dedza district: Formerly cattle-owners but no terminology left and no association with ancestor cult
Burial customs: in skin near kraal	Cewa and Tumbuka: Graves outside village; buried in a mat

[1] Tew, M., op. cit.
[2] Hodgson, A. G. O. 'Notes on the Achewa and Angoni of Dowa District, Nyasaland.' *J. Royal Anthropological Institute*, 1933, pp. 126–64.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

The distinctiveness of Ngoni institutions, so often emphasized by the older men and by the early travellers in Nyasaland, was due to cultural affinities with the South-eastern Bantu. The attached table sets out those social and cultural elements in the Ngoni kingdoms which were most distinct from parallel features among the neighbouring peoples, and which had obvious affinity with South-eastern Bantu cultures. The main Ngoni cultural elements have already been referred to in this chapter and will be further discussed in the rest of this study. The corresponding elements among the local peoples are based partly on the earlier sources quoted by Tew and partly on local informants and my own observations. In collecting information about clans, the *mbumba* group consisting of a man with his sisters' children, and the girls' initiation schools, I had no direct contacts with any except Cewa sources.

Variations in cultural conformity among the Ngoni

In the Ngoni kingdoms among families with Swazi and trans-Zambesi clan descent names there was considerable variation in the degree to which they maintained Ngoni institutions and practised Ngoni cultural forms. The anthropologist was constantly aware that the time element was an important factor in the consolidation of Ngoni practices and in the attitudes developed towards Ngoni culture among the individuals in the different generations. The Ngoni in both kingdoms spoke of the 'older generations' (*mibadwo wa kale*), 'the middle generations' (*mibadwo wa mpkati*), and 'the present generation' (*mibadwo wa tsopano*). The first had grown to adulthood before the Europeans came, and were the older senior men and women in the 1930's; the second had been affected by European missionaries, traders, and officials while they were young men and women; the third had never known anything but European contacts and many had grown up in European schools. The senior Ngoni of the older generation often expressed the sentiment: *zatha zonse tsopano* (everything is finished now). They included in that saying the regrets of the older Ngoni for their former independence, and their resentment at the domination of European rule and European culture. It is idle to speculate what cultural changes might have taken place in the Ngoni kingdoms if European influence had been postponed another twenty to thirty years. Nevertheless it is a vital factor in assessing Ngoni culture that the kingdoms had barely twenty years of independent existence before the Europeans began to penetrate Nyasaland. The older Ngoni looked back on their former independent existence as a golden age in which they were spreading Ngoni customs and culture as well as exercising political supremacy. It is difficult to believe that this was wholly true, in view of the extensive cultural interchange going on in the country as a whole. It is, however, possible that wider acceptance of Ngoni cultural elements was prevented by the advent of the Europeans, in so far as cultural institutions and political dominance were closely

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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885 692 diagram is that of the *madoda*, the older men who wore the head-ring. Probably in pre-European days they received more recognition than was apparent in the 1930's after the head-ring had been given up. The *madoda* will be referred to in the next chapter on the royal village and in Chapter V of Part III on age sets. In the appeal court of the Paramount and in the chief's court there was always a group of these senior men sitting behind the *izinduna*, to whom the *induna* speaking to the case sometimes turned for advice and consultation.

645 Reference was made to an overlap between territorial office-bearers and national office-bearers. The big *izinduna*, the spokesman of the Paramount, and sometimes the messengers, were members of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans, and often were *alumuzana* who had no courts. This was a method by which in the 1930's those *alumuzana* could be drawn into the circle of officials and receive a small salary for their services.

This set of office-bearers which we have considered in relation to the Paramount, with the exception of his spokesman and his praiser, was duplicated for the chiefs in both kingdoms, whether they were of the royal clan or *alumuzana*. The account of the royal village in the central kingdom which follows in the next chapter will illustrate how these officials functioned in the day-to-day affairs of the Paramount's headquarters.

CHAPTER V

A ROYAL VILLAGE AFTER 1933

The Paramount and his village

361 [114] [131] 161 For some weeks in 1935 and in 1936 I lived in the Paramount's village of Maganga in the central kingdom. The central kingdom included all Ncheu district, consisting of 1,092 square miles, a total population of 88,446, and a density of 80·99 per square mile. The village was 300 yards off the main road running from north to south of Nyasaland, and was approached by a hoed motor road flanked by huts. It consisted of three main sections: the Paramount's large brick residence and the surrounding buildings within a palisade or reed fence, including the huts of his daughter and son-in-law, and of his brother-in-law and sister; the huts and kraal in the section of the *induna* of his big house, Kalilombe Mbewe; and the huts and kraal of the original village 'owned' by the headman, Lazaro Dzonzi. On the south of the village was the large open space where the weekly market was held, and where several Indian stores faced the main road. On the north was the dispensary building,

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CHAPTER I

NGONI SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

A BRIEF review was given in Chapter III of Part I of the main elements of Ngoni culture, analysed into 'patterns' covering kinship, village lay-out, ritual, ceremonial, and language. In this section we shall be considering the principal social institutions embodying Ngoni culture: their clans, houses, families and age sets. We shall find evidence in the two kingdoms of an extensive common element in the social organization which the Ngoni brought with them from the south. Some important diversities will be evident also, such as the variations in virilocal residence found in the central kingdom, and the less widespread practice there of *lobola* marriage. Those elements which were common to Ngoni social organization in both kingdoms were often those which distinguished Ngoni culture from that of the neighbouring peoples. Patrilineal descent, the house system, the ranking of clans, the *laweni* organization of boys' life and activities—these were all distinctively Ngoni, practised by families of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans, and sometimes adopted by individuals and families of other clans who had been associated with the Ngoni over long periods. Nevertheless, in many of the villages of the central kingdom there were clearly two cultures existing side by side: the Ngoni culture being that of an aristocratic minority and the local culture that of the majority, who in the kingdom were equally subjects of the Paramount but in their villages possessed inferior social status.

Indications were to be seen, even in the more conservative and more isolated northern kingdom, that modern influences were affecting Ngoni social institutions. We have already noticed some of the effects of the cessation of warfare on a social system founded on military traditions. The exodus of young men from Ngoni villages to seek work elsewhere was very extensive, especially in the northern kingdom, where the level of education was higher but employment was not available, and this had repercussions on the age of marriage, the distribution of wealth, and the undertaking of family responsibilities, including the care of the old people. The gradual decline in polygyny, largely but not entirely due to the work of missions, was beginning to have its effects on the working of the house system and on the interrelations of the generations within the family group.

In the 1930's many of these modern changes were appearing but the traditional institutions were still functioning, and the Ngoni leaders themselves were clear about those forms and activities which were distinctively their own.

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CHAPTER I

THE ANCESTRAL SPIRITS AND THE ARISTOCRATIC TRADITION

THIS section is not an account of Ngoni religion. It would require a study in itself to examine their beliefs about supernatural beings, their ideas on cosmogony, their concepts of the causes of disaster and sickness, their approach to and practice of forms of magic, and their attitude to witchcraft. Living in Ngoni villages, listening to individuals of different ages discussing prosperity and disaster, the seen and the unseen, the known and the feared, it was clear that it would be difficult to isolate a comprehensive system of beliefs and say that these were distinctively Ngoni beliefs concerning religion and magic and witchcraft. The observer was always aware of the intermingling of ideas and practices from the many Nyasaland tribal peoples who lived side by side and were in constant contact with one another in all those spheres of thought and action which demanded explanation and some remedial or therapeutic treatment. Among the Nyasaland tribes in the 1930's the influence of sixty years of Christian teaching by the missions played an important part, since the missions had introduced western medicine and education as well as a new religion and ethic, and so had influenced both thinking and action among their converts and their families.

In this complex situation it was virtually impossible to say: this is the Cewa religion, this is the Tumbuka cosmogony, this is Ntumba magic. It was nevertheless clear that there was an Ngoni cult of their ancestral spirits, which was not shared, in the form in which they practised it, by any of the neighbouring peoples, and the Ngoni had their own selective methods of relating it to Christian beliefs and practices. One reason why the Ngoni ancestor cult could be singled out as peculiar to them was its foundation in their aristocratic tradition. As long as the Ngoni political and social structure and organization survived, including the reciprocal roles of leading men and important women, the concept of houses with their ownership of cattle, and the role of the *gogo* house in maintaining tradition and carrying out ritual, the performance of the cult of ancestral spirits was assured. The eminent ancestors whose spirits were guarded in a village and who were known and remembered were addressed in times of trouble, and meat was offered to them as a form of sacrifice from the herd of cattle associated with the house to which they had belonged. This section will deal with the cult of ancestral spirits of the Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans who formed the political and social aristocracy. Thus, in the form described here, the cult is

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178 The pressure on the Ngoni to possess ready cash was directly
231 related to their prestige in the villages and kingdoms, and to the status
437 of the Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans. Money was needed for good
554 buildings and good clothing, two of the modern signs of status which
the Ngoni could not ignore. Faced with this situation, and unwilling,
[453] except among the urban Ngoni, to invest savings in banks,[1] they manipulated their cattle tradition to suit the new situation in several ways. In place of the frequent slaughter for food, there were occasional sales for cash. Money earned in wages was invested in cattle. The drive therefore was all the time to increase the herds, in order to be able to convert them into cash when the need arose.

Values and attitudes in cattle-ownership

114 Any attempt to probe below the surface of current practices in acquir-
233 ing, caring for and using cattle should be preceded by an extensive
565 survey of cattle-keeping, including the full implications of their place in the economy of Ngoni village and family life. Since a complete survey is not possible here, the assessment of the values inherent in the ownership of cattle and the resultant attitudes towards their acquisition and use is related in this chapter to the relationships between the living Ngoni and their ancestors. These values were primarily those of the senior men and women of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans, and hence those of the aristocracy. They were reflected in the attitudes of groups who owned cattle in the villages. Further analysis would show variations in the attitudes of individual members of those groups who possessed cattle, and would also show an approximation to the Ngoni attitudes by members of other groups, for example, village headmen of Ntumba clans whose fathers had journeyed and fought with the Ngoni in the past. The spread of cattle-keeping beyond the former exclusive monopoly of the leading clans and of leading men in them resulted in a number of different attitudes towards the acquisition and use of cattle. Some of these variations were suggested earlier in this chapter in the brief comparisons of Cewa and Ngoni ownership of cattle.

231 The primary value of cattle to the Ngoni was the security they repre-
556 sented. This security lay in assurance of social position, in being able to meet penalties imposed by the courts, in the potential command of labour, in the enjoyment of much prized food, in the performance of ritual for the dead and in sacrifices to the ancestors. The converse of this security was the fear of losing cattle, and this was primarily a group attitude rather than an individual one. A man living in a town who had sent money to his father to buy cattle, and who heard that they had died, very often shrugged his shoulders when he heard of the loss and

[1] The Ngoni in Blantyre put about half of their savings into banks and sent the rest to their home villages to buy cattle.

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in three age groups on the verandah also came forward and, led by NaNkoloma, a widow of Njolomole I, thanked in the women's language, '*Zimata, zaithwa mntwana wenkosi.*'

I did not witness any ritual sacrifices in the northern kingdom but the accounts given me by informants corresponded closely with the ritual in Mcakhatha just described. When sacrificing for rain to the spirits of the Paramount, a black ox with no white spot was driven into the kraal in the late afternoon and the chosen spokesman addressed the ancestral spirits of the Jere clan telling them that this was their beast, they must eat the meat and tell UMkulumqango that the people needed rain. While this man prayed to the spirits he stood facing the beast, and everyone else sat looking in front of them and keeping very quiet. The women stayed at home in their huts and the Paramount stayed in his hut 'as if mourning'. When the beast urinated and showed that the spirits had heard, a messenger came and informed the Paramount. The beast was killed early the next morning in the kraal. While the flaying took place, all the huts of the chief wives were smeared with dried cow-dung on the floors and on the smooth place outside the doors. The meat, in two parts, was taken into the *indlunkulu* and left there all night at the back, so that the spirits might lick it. The next morning the meat was cooked in the kraal by the *madoda* and when it was ready they reported to the big *induna*. He called all the people into the kraal and divided them into companies according to their sections and head villages. The meat was given to the head of each head village who divided it among his group. When everyone had finished, one of the leading men stood up and began to praise the spirit using his titles and praise-names (*izitokozo*). The rest stood up and shouted *Bayete*. They then began to dance a war-dance but, the informants added, that was soon stopped by torrents of rain.

These chapters on the Ngoni ancestor cult bring to an end this study of the two Ngoni kingdoms in Nyasaland in the 1930's. We have seen how their distinctiveness as a people depended on the culture which they brought with them from the south and how this culture was found among the families of the Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans. In the topics included in the three sections of this book: the political system, the social organization, and the ancestor cult, the main features of Ngoni culture are most clearly seen. In much of their economic and agricultural life there was little to distinguish them from their neighbours among the other Nyasaland peoples. The changes brought about by the missions, the schools, new forms of local government, and new types of occupation, were all tending to make the Ngoni less distinctive as a people. The conversion of some leading Ngoni to Christianity, as suggested in Chapter V of Part II, and the spread of schools were together the most powerful influences in altering Ngoni traditional culture. The

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organization of houses built on polygynous marriage, the ancestor cult, and other aspects of Ngoni culture, were profoundly affected by the teaching of Christianity and by the ideas and practices expected of adherents of the churches. Some leading Ngoni Christians like Cibambo attempted to make a synthesis between their past and their present, between traditional culture and modern life. Others said 'All is finished now.'

Two points which clearly emerged from a study of the Ngoni in the 1930's might indicate that the Ngoni as a distinct people were not 'finished'. One was their tenacity in adhering to certain traditional practices; the other was the ability they had shown in adapting their culture and political system to the mixed populations in their kingdoms.

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Introduction

Like the wooden Ngoni meat dish, this book stands on three firm legs. It is the outcome of lecturing for over twenty years to teachers and students of education from all over the world on how an anthropologist approaches the study of education. It is the result of living for three and a half years in Ngoni villages in Nyasaland, watching how they brought up their children, hearing their reasons for the shaping of that upbringing, and seeing what use they made of formal education in mission schools. And lastly, since the war ended, young parents in several countries have talked with me now and then about how they were bringing up their children and what they thought of schools in relation to their home training.

I like to think, though it may be self-flattery, that a close study of the home and of parents' attitudes towards the bringing up of their children is an essential complement to the ideas presented to young teachers, and to older ones too for that matter, of what education is and how it works. I am often startled, and driven to furious thinking, when I come across statements like these: 'School is a civilizing place,' from the Harvard Committee on Education in a Free Society; or 'We have to rely on the schools for the training of character' from the Beecher Report on Education in Kenya; or 'The school is an institution specifically established to produce desirable changes in behaviour,' from the opening address to a symposium on Education and Anthropology at Stanford University, California. We all know that there are parents everywhere who are only too thankful to

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186 563 621 in the village, whom they regarded as inferior not only because they had been conquered, but because they disliked and despised their way of living. This sense of separateness from and of superiority to the non-Ngoni elements in the villages had its counterpart in the close ties which existed with Ngoni families in other villages. These ties were reinforced socially by 'dynastic' or inter-clan marriages, and politically through the hierarchy of courts and officials leading up to the Paramount's court and entourage. [582] [631]

565 621 [183] [177] The Ngoni aristocracy endeavoured to maintain their traditional ways of living and of bringing up their children in the face of changes creeping in from the non-Ngoni elements in the village, as well as from external European influences. The maintenance of Ngoni ways of living and cultural patterns of behaviour depended on three main elements in village society. One was the degree of integration between the Ngoni men in their house groups and in village society as a whole. This was most evident in chiefs' villages, and in the villages belonging to the heads of clans. The second element was the number of wives of true Ngoni families who had married into the village, thus combining the influence of husband and wife, or rather of father and mother, in bringing up children on the Ngoni pattern. The third element was the number and influence of senior women of Ngoni families, either wives of older men in the village, or widows of former leaders. This senior women's group, many of whom were addressed as 'mother' by the Ngoni fathers of young families, were a formidable force in maintaining tradition, by advising their sons, coercing their daughters-in-law, and holding on to their authority at every stage of the children's development. [562] [593] [606]

Life in two Ngoni villages

121 [114] I am going briefly to sketch in, as a general background for the following chapters, the main features of two villages, in one of which I lived for several months, in the other for a few weeks.

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177 society and particularly their children to new ways of living and thinking. These then are the four aspects of the study
121 for which I sought clues: awareness of their society, definite cultural values, social control of bringing up children, adaptation to external change.

114 In alluding to the following authors and the ways in which
121 they furnished clues for this study, I hope it may lead readers to consult the full works for themselves, and indeed to explore others which can be found in any good bibliography on socialization or on personality and culture. Over many years I have read and re-read Ralph Linton's *The Cultural Background of Personality*, in order to throw light on my own studies and to illustrate my lectures. When assembling the material for this Ngoni study I welcomed and followed up his thesis that 'some groups are much more conscious of the existence of culture and much more prone to generalize about behaviour than others'. That and other passages certainly helped to throw light on the Ngoni awareness of their own culture and their articulateness about behavioural training.

Linton also assisted me, though I did not completely agree with all his analysis, in placing cultural values in their relation to the accepted personality patterns. I used here other clues, and notably those provided by Monica Wilson in her book *Good Company* and John Whiting in his field manual for studies of child training. The Nyakusa values, brought out so clearly by Professor Wilson, I was able to compare with Ngoni values. Among the Nyakusa, 'good company', dignity, display, decency, wisdom, were constantly stressed and behaviour on these lines was commended by adults. The Nyakusa were a homogeneous and secure people, whose system of age-villages was unique among the surrounding peoples and a powerful force in maintaining and developing socially desirable forms of behaviour. Dr Whiting, in his field study manual, suggests eight 'systems of behaviour' for field workers to observe and classify in terms of individual

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child behaviour. Five of them appear to suggest values some of which have a place either in Nyakusa or Ngoni ideal personality patterns: self-reliance, obedience, responsibility, sociability, dominance. But there is at least one major difference between the approaches of Professor Wilson and Dr Whiting to the training of children. Professor Wilson is describing the values of Nyakusa adults and their effect on the bringing up of children. Dr Whiting has selected from a series of cultures certain typical or common forms of behaviour which might be displayed by children. These forms of behaviour might represent general social values, but they are not set in the context of any one culture, and the criterion is whether an observer saw a child displaying sociability rather than whether the society desired their children to show sociability and took steps to encourage it. This book was after all a manual to be usable in a number of cultural situations. His emphasis is nevertheless on the observed behaviour of selected children, and illustrates my point made in the early pages of this chapter; whereas Professor Wilson's emphasis was on the adult ideal personality to which, it was hoped, Nyakusa children would conform.

The existence of a 'system' in the upbringing of children, a system set up by a society and under its control, posed a number of questions. Clyde Kluckhohn in several of his books has for a long time provided me with clues in the study of 'systems', and many of these clues are summarized in the chapter on Personality and Culture in his book *Mirror for Man*. Especially in two directions these clues have proved helpful: in his distinction between two kinds of cultural learning, technical and regulatory, or acquiring skills and learning to behave, the latter taking place in the early years of childhood, and acquiring skills in later years; and in his theme of predictability, illustrated in this quotation: 'A definition of socialization in any culture is the predictability of an individual's daily behaviour in various defined situations. . . . When a person behaves most of the

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114 time as others do in following cultural routines, he is then 121 socialized.'

I have deliberately carried on the study of the Ngoni 'system' through what are generally called the adolescent years. In so doing I followed some of the clues in Professor Linton's discussion of how different societies treated adolescence and its alleged problems. Dr H. M. Ammar also provided a clue in his account of the sharp gulf in the Egyptian village of Silwa between child and adult, between the ways of childhood and the values of adulthood. But in sorting out the problems which the Ngoni study presented, I have drawn also on my recollection of discussions with Dr Kurt Hahn at Gordonstoun about the place of adolescents in society, and whether what is commonly called 'an awkward age' is necessarily part of a child's growing up. Two particular contributions of Kurt Hahn's have thrown light on the young Ngoni adult. One was the correlation between physical stages of growth and social responsibility; and the other was the close connexion between acquiring skills which are socially valuable and essential, and the general maturing of the young adult, especially in his growing confidence in himself and in his self-respect.

On the fourth point, the effect of external changes such as schools on child training, I found much that was useful in Oscar Lewis' *Life in a Mexican Village*. It seems to me he has gone further than most anthropologists in examining the school and its methods and ideas in relation to a traditional culture and society. From an educational as well as from an anthropological angle, H. M. Ammar's analysis of the place of schools in Egyptian villages is also very stimulating.

Social horizons of Ngoni children

129 [114] Most studies of child training concentrate, or at least place the main emphasis, on a child in his family setting, with the connotation of a family in the western individual sense of father, mother and their children. The subsequent chapters

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not enough milk, or was unable to suckle the child, or was ill or died. If a woman died in or just after childbirth, and the child survived, it might be suckled by the paternal grandmother or by another co-wife of the dead woman, but as a rule they resorted to artificial feeding, and often used it to supplement breast feeding. The father of the child took the food pipe of a beast recently killed, washed it and dried it, and handed it over to the women to rub with fat until it was soft and pliable. One end was then tied tightly to close it, it was filled with warm cow's milk, and the other end was tied loosely so that the child could just suck through it. It was kept well washed with warm water, and many infants were brought up successfully with this 'bottle'.

The babies were also given very thin gruel made of millet or maize flour, and curds and whey beaten up together. This was put in a very small gourd, decorated with drawings, with a spout to pour from, and a cover to keep flies and dust out.

Weaning

Studies of weaning in different cultures lay emphasis on the traumatic shock of separation from the mother, not only in terms of being refused the breast, but also of being removed to sleep elsewhere than beside the mother, and perhaps being sent away to stay with another relative.

In the Ngoni pattern of nurse-girl care and of supplementary feeding, especially after the first few months, it might seem that the actual weaning was less of a shock than in cultural situations where the baby was with the mother all day, carried about by her and never refused the breast if it cried. Ngoni women, however, and men too, all asserted that weaning was a shock to the child, even if it happened at two years old.

The reasons for this shock were partly that it was done all in one morning at one fell swoop, and partly that the child was sent away from the mother at night. The same nurse girl looked after it all day, but now took it more often to

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the observer or anthropologist. One such observer might pursue the line suggested by the use of different persons of the verb and different pronouns in personal contacts, and the values inherent in such standardized usage. Another might choose to examine the institution of the boys' dormitory and its contribution to the total value system. Another might take the different emphases in bringing up boys and girls in relation to the fact that men were the permanent element in village society and that girls left the village on marriage. A dozen more examples could be taken from the narrative chapters of this study and usefully followed up. They would all illustrate, in the first instance, the subjective nature of the initial selection, whether the final results of several different investigations made a coherent integrated system or not. They would also illustrate the uncharted area of such studies, where there is little to guide the observer and the analyst, in spite of the growing interest in recent years in studying the value systems of non-literate societies.

Among the leads which I found most useful has been Professor Monica Wilson's *Good Company*, to which I referred in Chapter I, where she associated cultural values with the age-village system in Nyakusa society. I owe much also to help and suggestions given to me at Harvard by Professor Cora Du Bois and Dr Ethel Albert, and to Professor Kluckhohn and his associates in discussions on their published and projected series on the study of values.

The relation between Ngoni values and their ideal personality pattern is based on the study of their society and culture described in my earlier book, and on the analysis of their system of bringing up children in this book. I referred in Chapter II to certain values as group values and to others as personal values. I am not sure that the distinction is a valid one, but it is a convenient form of classification and it corresponds closely to the Ngoni way of thinking. They were continually referring to their society, or a local community in it, as if it were an integrated whole, and to the effect of

information is insufficient for any reconstruction in great detail, but the general principles are clear and to some extent our conclusions can be checked by reference to material from other areas, particularly the nineteenth century accounts of the Ngoni of Northern Nyasaland and the Zulu. The account of present-day marriage is based on information collected in the field during 1946-9.[1]

The period of the 1890's is chosen for comparison with the present because of the catastrophic change in Ngoni life which occurred in 1898 when they were defeated by the British. Old people who were alive during the period are still available for questioning and many younger people have been told of those times by their parents and grandparents. Although Ngoni cannot generally remember beyond their grandparents, genealogies collected now yield some information about the 1890's and link that period to the present. Important social changes occurred in 1898, changes which for the greater part were, and still are, regretted by the Ngoni, and these accentuate the difference between time present and time past. The past is recollected and recounted and has a moral value. Children are taught the glories of the past to compensate them for the inadequacies of the present. The teaching of tribal history as a school subject reinforces this view. With the passage of time the past has been idealized and simplified but the picture is still clear enough for us to be able to distinguish probable fact from unlikely rationalization. Marriage in 'the time of peace', as the period prior to 1898 is called, is one aspect of this picture.

Marriage is one part of kinship, for it is by the twin processes of marriage and childbirth that the web of kinship is spun. For the purposes of our analysis we have had to sever marriage from its context in what may appear at times rather an arbitrary fashion. A society is a whole, if not always a well integrated whole, and no one part of it can be fully understood without a simultaneous knowledge of all its other parts. Societies persist, more or less, through time, and it is clear that we cannot hope to grasp the total significance of the working of a society at any one time without a knowledge of the changes or lack of change in that society both before and after. Yet we cannot marshal all these relationships simultaneously, let alone present them through the medium of words. Our attempt to comprehend the present cannot wait until we have full knowledge of the future, and our analysis of one sector of a system must proceed in advance of our synthesis of the whole. Ngoni society has persisted through the last sixty years rather less than more, and it may well be argued that present-day Ngoni society is poorly integrated. Nevertheless it is to be hoped that an analysis of Ngoni marriage may, on the one hand, demonstrate

[1] I made two visits to the Fort Jameson Ngoni while on the staff of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, spending in all a year and eight months there. I was assisted by my clerk, Mr. M. B. Lukhero, in inquiring into former conditions as well as observing contemporary social life.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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contributed by the whole nation, were not found among the Ngoni.

Informants are agreed that in the old days young men and women married whom they were told and never attempted to make their own choice against their parents' will. From evidence available this seems to be an oversimplification. It seems likely that individual choice mattered less in those days than it does now, but it cannot have been entirely inoperative. It is said that each regiment of men used to flirt with its corresponding women's regiment, and that marriages sometimes followed. Wiese says that among the aristocratic families a woman had the right to choose her own husband, but that this right was dying out and it was becoming the practice to marry off daughters so as to secure the most marriage cattle and maintain upper-class endogamy.[3] It is true that on the evidence of genealogies there do not seem to have been many marriages between very aristocratic women and the most recently captured men, and that therefore we are justified in assuming a tendency towards upper-class endogamy, but this tendency seems not to have been very strong and indeed there never was a clear-cut upper class but instead a method of ranking families in terms of ethnic origin. My informants never suggested that a man would marry his daughter so as to bring in as many cattle as possible, and it seems unlikely that this was ever a common motive.[4]

A girl was expected to be chaste before she was married. From the procedure adopted by the Zulu and from information from other Ngoni groups, it seems likely that girls were examined at marriage to check that they had not been deflowered. Rattray records this among the Ngoni of Southern Nyasaland,[5] and Read makes a similar statement.[6] My own informants had such faith in the sexual rectitude of the past as contrasted with the promiscuity of the present that it was difficult to establish what they really thought happened. It seems that unmarried people were allowed intercourse *inter crura* and that this was considered not a violation of chastity. The whole question has been obscured by the conflict of values between the South-Eastern Bantu leaders, whose view appeared to have prevailed at the time, and the recent captives from the Cewa and kindred peoples, who believed that a girl would die if she did not copulate at puberty. We shall see the outcome of this conflict when we come to discuss modern marriage.

As might be anticipated in a system in which marriage is a transfer of fertility, a wife was expected to be fertile. If she was barren special procedures were adopted to validate the substance of the marriage. A man could appeal to his wife's relatives for another

[3] Wiese, op. cit. 'Expediçao . . .', p. 473 and 'Geschichte . . .', p. 191.
[4] See below, p. 120.
[5] Rattray, *Some folk-lore stories and songs in Chinyanja, with English translation and notes*, S.P.C.K., 1907, p. 115.
[6] Margaret Read, 'The Moral code of the Ngoni and their former military state', *Africa*, xi (1938), p. 6.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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segment of the residential system was recognized and institutionalized. Furthermore, it is in line with this thesis that, in arranging the marriage of recent captives, no great attention was paid to the establishment of farflung affinal links. Frequently a man and a woman who had been allocated to the same captor, and whom they both addressed as 'father', married one another on his instructions. Payments made in these marriages were small or non-existent. Recent captives were too low in the hierarchical structure to be concerned about reinforcing their position by horizontal ties. Their ambitions were directed to securing promotion by becoming lieutenants of their captors.

5. Autonomy of marriage

The pattern of segmentation of the residential system was continually changing. In part this was due to proliferation downwards, that is, by the process of increasing segmentation between brothers and between fathers' sons. In addition to this process political promotion and death in war altered the relative position of the segments associated with particular people. Marriage itself was a social process which, in so far as the relationship between man and wife was concerned, did not react directly on the residential system. This system was based on patrilineal descent and patrilocal residence and the movements of women, except at the level of the queens, were from one point of view irrelevant to the system. It was the grouping of children round their mother, in contrast to their father's children by other wives, which related the marriages of one generation to the patterns of segmentation of the next. A woman with no children in her house, whether her status was high or low, was structurally irrelevant to the residential system.

Marriage was also largely independent of the central government. Warfare, not domesticity, was the right and proper occupation of young men, and the age at which men married for the first time was probably about thirty. Informants all stressed that in the old days first marriage took place at later ages for both men and women than it does now. Wiese implies that girls were married any time after puberty,[20] but my informants stated that girls did not usually marry until they were aged about twenty to twenty-five. Men and women were organized into parallel age-sets, usually referred to as regiments, and corresponding regiments used to dance and frolic together. Sometimes a man took a wife from the regiment corresponding to his own, but there does not seem to have been any positive obligation to do so. Particular regiments were not prevented from marrying, as among the Zulu, and all the tales of the Paramount Chief intervening in the affairs of warriors are phrased in terms of the chief instructing a laggard to find himself a wife when all his age mates had already married. The chief did however interfere

[20] Wiese, op. cit. 'Expediçao . . .', p. 473, and 'Geschichte . . .', p. 191.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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as well as to her husband and his kin, while a man tries to enlist the support of his own kin but not usually of his wife's kin if the dispute has nothing to do with marital affairs. At birth and death the division of labour and responsibility is mainly on sex lines. In general we may say that the elementary family does not emerge as a grouping of importance because there is no system of elementary families in which it can do so. Village is posed against village in dances, songs, the collection of tax, hunts, division of food, and so on. In other situations, one group of kinsmen act as a body in distinction to another group of kinsmen who are their affines. We have demonstrated this for the ceremonial situations of marriage and for the resolution of quarrels. In the intimacies of the hut, man and wife are in a simple and specific dyadic relationship which does not admit of substitution. To some extent, their infant, from conception to weaning, is a helpless appendage of this relationship. From weaning on, children acquire other social relationships of their own. The distinction drawn between marriage and the care of children is well illustrated by the remark made by an old widow when I asked her why she did not marry again. She replied 'I am now too old for marriage. My job is to look after children.' The missions encourage men and women to bring up and care for their own children, particularly where the children's grandparents are pagan. At the same time the importance of the economic ties that link every Ngoni household with the rest of the world is increasing and it is easier for men to find extra money when they are young and middle-aged than when they become grandparents. These two factors may lead to an increase in the importance of the elementary family, but it is also possible that the number of children sent home from Southern Rhodesia to their grandparents may grow as more women go there to join their husbands, thus increasing the responsibilities of the old towards their young grandchildren.

9. Kinship structure, marriage payments and divorce

We have seen that whereas in the old days divorce was infrequent, it is now comparatively common. We have also seen that prior to 1898 the kinship structure of the Ngoni was based on localized agnatic and quasi-agnatic lineages, for the captor-captive relationship was similar to that between father and child. These lineages are now no longer effective social groups, and individuals act and live together with cognates and affines related to them in a variety of ways. This parallel change in divorce frequency and in kinship structure provides confirmation for the hypothesis put forward by Gluckman that divorce is rare and difficult in tribes organized on a system of marked father-right, and frequent and easy to obtain in other types.[6] This hypothesis was suggested by a comparison of different tribes which Gluckman divides into two types. Among

[6] Gluckman, op. cit., p. 190.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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others, the Zulu and Nuer have agnatic lineages and rare divorce, while the Lozi and Ila lack agnatic lineages and have frequent divorce. The Ngoni before 1898 appear to belong to the first type and the Ngoni of the present-day to the second. In 'the time of peace' the fertility of the married woman was transferred by the payment of bridewealth to her husband's lineage segment, and the children whom she produced were recruits to that segment. Her agnates could never claim the children for their matrilateral segment. Associated with this system were the levirate, the sororate, and the right to enforce betrothal on pain of the return of gifts. The simple legal family was a relatively stable unit, and its position within the lineage segment was determined rigidly by the ranking of co-wives. Divorce was rare and could be effected only on the initiative of the husband. By contrast the affiliation of children nowadays is not fixed, and the very groups themselves to which they would formerly have attached themselves are no longer important. The children borne by a woman, whatever marriage payments have or have not been made for her, are potential recruits to local kin groups led by a variety of different relatives. Compared with the past, the simple legal family is unstable and divorce is frequent and easy. As might be expected, the levirate and sororate and enforceable betrothal, the trappings of the old system, have declined in importance.

Gluckman also suggests that in general, marriage payments fall in value with the decreasing dominance of patrilineal descent, although he cites the Ila as a virilocal people with high marriage payments, no agnatic lineages and frequent divorce. He regards the influence of property on marriage payments as secondary, but writes: 'On this hypothesis, which needs more testing, the amount of goods transferred and the divorce rate tend to be directly associated, but both are rooted in the kinship structure. It is rare divorce which allows high marriage payment, rather than high marriage payment which prevents divorce.'[1] The Ngoni material suggests that payments, kinship structure and divorce frequency are connected and that among them, as among the Ila, frequent divorce does not preclude high payments.

We may distinguish three phases in the history of Ngoni marriage payments. Prior to 1898 bridewealth varied in amount from one to a dozen beasts, depending on the status of the woman's father. In addition, recently captured women were married, both by men of high and low status, without payment of cattle. There is no indication that divorce was any less rare in one section of the community than another. In our pre-1898 sample, as set out in Table I, only one marriage out of eighteen ended in divorce, despite the absence of payments in half the marriages. It is true that in the single instance of divorce there were no marriage payments, yet even this marriage does not suggest marital instability as we

[1] Gluckman, op. cit., pp. 192, 200.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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have been discussing it. Divorce took place because the man, a recently captured Kunda, ran away back to his former tribe leaving his wife, daughter of one of Mpezeni's lieutenants, behind in her father's village. In 'the time of peace' marriages were stable, with or without payment. The wealthy men were the politically important men, and indeed Wiese's assertion that men married off their daughters so as to gain the maximum number of cattle[1] may be based on the behaviour of socially ambitious fathers in what was largely an upward-mobile society. Political affiliation effected by marriage was ratified by a transfer of wealth appropriate to its importance in the general field of political and social relations. Divorce frequency and kinship structure were the same for rich and poor, aristocrats and captives, and were neutral factors in determining the amount of marriage payment.

The second phase began immediately after the war of 1898 and lasted until about 1930. At the beginning of this period the tribe as a whole was poorer than it has been before or since. Many cattle were looted in the war and for a long time there was little money in circulation. The majority of marriages without payment were contracted during this phase, and it seems reasonable to associate this in part with the poverty of the people. It is difficult to make any precise estimate of divorce frequency at this time, although we know that many Cewa and Nsenga women who had been married before 1898 deserted their husbands and returned home when British control was established. There does not seem to be any evidence for supposing that at this period women moved from one husband to another within the confines of the Ngoni kingdom more quickly than they do now. It is perhaps safe to say that the low level of payments was due partly to poverty but also partly to the general uncertainty about the future, about the kind of society which the White Administration was building for the Ngoni. Evans-Pritchard has stressed that 'It is morals that censure divorce and law that refuses to recognize grounds for divorce which ensure the stability of the union of husband and wife.'[2] The laws and moral code that had been enforced by the old chieftainship had been shaken by the defeat of 1898. The payment of bridewealth had defined legitimate expectations of behaviour, obligations and rights, within an organized system of social relations which had been shattered. While many Ngoni must still have regarded marriage with payment of bridewealth as morally right and desirable, they must also have been aware of the greatly increased risk they were running when making these payments, even if they had the cattle to make them. Rights *in uxorem* and *in genetricem* which were socially recognized but could not be enforced through the machinery of the State were hardly

[1] See above, p. 3, footnote 3.
[2] Evans-Pritchard, 'Social character of bride-wealth, with special reference to the Azande', *Man*, xxxiv (1934), p. 174.

5:Allan C-5 (1941) 1949 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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PREFACE

The four papers reproduced here deal with a method of estimating land carrying capacities for human populations under African conditions and systems of land usage, and the application of this method to the study of practical problems. The method itself is based on Trapnell's work on the soils and agricultural systems of the Territory, and details of the method as applied in practice have largely been evolved in collaboration between him and the author, with material assistance from other members of the Agricultural Department.

The first paper gives an outline of the technique used in carrying out detailed studies of land problems in the Eastern and Western Provinces of Northern Rhodesia. The basic conceptions of land deterioration and population carrying capacity, the relation of Native land usage to the vegetation-soil unit and the factors involved in the estimation of critical densities, which are discussed in this account, have already been referred to in Trapnell's *Ecological Report on North-Eastern Rhodesia* (paras. 37–41, 79 and 302–26). The main emphasis in Trapnell's account, however, is on the land deterioration aspect, whereas in the present essay the subject is given fuller treatment from the population standpoint and in the light of recent work on the redistribution of populations.

The second paper consists of a report, submitted to Government in 1940, on a reconnaisance survey of conditions in the area of the Lamba Chief Mushiri. This survey was the first attempt to apply the conception of land carrying capacity and the method of estimation to the study of a specific practical problem. Shortly afterwards the method was applied, on a vastly greater and more detailed scale, to the resettlement of congested populations in the Fort Jameson and Petauke Districts of the Eastern Province. In 1943 further study was given to the whole proplem of the concentration of populations, including that of Mushiri's area, about the southern and eastern rim of the Copperbelt. In the interval a Government Land Commission had visited the area. This Commission reported that the predictions made in the original report were being rapidly fulfilled and recommended the immediate grant of additional land under controlled settlement. Resettlement of populations from Mushiri and other overcrowded chieftaincies was started in 1943 and all of the recommendations contained in the original report have now been carried out or are in process of completion (see Annual Reports of the Agricultural Department, 1943–6). It will be noted that the Vegetation-Soil units have been revised and that other factors in the method of estimation have been somewhat modified, as a result of greater knowledge, since the original pioneer survey was made.

The third paper is a report, presented to Government in October 1944, on the vexed question of the adequacy or otherwise of the native reserves

5: Allan C-5 (1941) 1949 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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low productivity and little power of recovery. Next, the weaker soils will be abandoned: such data as we have suggests that this stage is reached when grain yields fall below 200 lb. per acre in the normal season. The former cultivators of the abandoned land may then offer work in exchange for the food surplus still enjoyed by the holders of the stronger soils, or they may be entitled to a share of the surplus by virtue of kinship obligations. In this way a period of increasing pressure and accelerated erosion on the stronger and more fertile soils is brought about. These stages will commonly be accompanied by migration of able-bodied men to the centres of employment and the stage finally be reached when the area is dependent to a large extent on food purchased from outside sources.

In 1941 a study was made of a highly congested area in Fort Jameson District; the area of Mpezeni, Paramount Chief of the Ngoni. The chieftaincy was found to be 54,000 acres in extent and, after detailed survey, the carrying capacity for traditional Ngoni agriculture was estimated to be about 1,300 to 1,400 persons. A total of 7,700 people, between five and six times the carrying capacity, were supposedly living within the chieftaincy. In short, an area which, because of the high proportion of mountain country, had a critical density of only about 16 persons per square mile did in fact appear to be carrying over 90 to the square mile.

The main reasons for the continued survival of this population were found to be as follows:

(a) The time during which these conditions had existed (about 15 years) was not sufficient to show the full effects of this degree of land pressure.

(b) Great areas of hill country and dambos, which would not normally be cultivated, had been taken into cultivation. The almost incredible mountain cultivation on the Nyamfinzi range was, until recently, a startling spectacle. Use of dambo grassland for *fipoka* gardens had seriously reduced grazing and was a sore point with the cattle-loving Ngoni.

(c) Under extreme pressure the population had burst its bounds and an irresistible tide had inundated adjoining private land and unoccupied European farms. In addition, a missionary organization had permitted cultivation, on payment, on land owned by the mission. By these means the effective acreage had, in fact, been increased by almost 50 per cent.

(d) A very heavy burden had been thrown on the limited soils of high fertility and resistance to erosion, the only soils left in the original area still carrying moderately good crops. These soils, then in continuous cultivation, were feeding more than twice as many people as they would normally do.

(e) The Paramount Chief was importing from Nyasaland each year a considerable quantity of food for the use of his people.

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Other areas of the Territory, notably the reserves of the Northern and Eastern Provinces, provide similar examples for different systems and land categories. In the second Report of the Ecological Survey (North Eastern Rhodesia, paras. 316–20) Trapnell records a wide range of observations on areas where land degeneration and soil erosion had become marked, in relation to land categories, population densities and the time factor. These observations provide independent evidence of the relatively low carrying capacity of much of our land under the traditional systems, and they accord well with the estimates obtained by the methods outlined in this paper.

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5: Allan C-5 (1941)1949 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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of mixed farming would not have solved the problem without the transfer of a considerable proportion of the people.

§. 2. *Recommendations of the Land Commission*

In 1941 a large part of the land held by the North Charterland Exploration Company in the Fort Jameson and Petauke Districts was acquired by Government, and in 1942 a Land Commission was appointed which included in its terms of reference the making of 'full provision for the agricultural requirements of the Natives'. This Commission recommended that some 5,600 square miles of unalienated Crown Land in the Fort Jameson and Petauke Districts, about 2,000 square miles in the Mkushi District and 4,800 square miles in the Ndola District, should be constituted Native Trust Land and made available for Native occupation.

§ 3. *The Problem of Resettlement*

The problem then resolved itself into making the best possible use of the additional land, and using it in such a way as to restore the population-land balance where this could be done. It was not, of course, possible, even if it had been desirable, to recreate the primary population-land pattern, but the grant of additional land gave an opportunity of creating a planned tertiary pattern to replace the arbitrary secondary pattern.

Such planning requires a detailed knowledge of the land and of the agricultural systems employed on it. Fortunately the basic knowledge had already been provided by the Ecological Survey of the Territory. The vegetation-soil method, evolved by Trapnell, provided a rapid and reliable means of land classification and, again on the basis of the work of the survey, a method of estimating approximate land carrying capacities for traditional African systems of usage was devised. Description of the vegetation-soil method of land classification will be found in the two reports of the Ecological Survey and notes on the factors involved in the estimation of land carrying capacities are given in the second of these reports.*

A complete description of the method of estimating land carrying capacities, as employed in the resettlement work, and examples of its application are given in the other papers in this series.

It is necessary to understand clearly what is meant by the terms 'land carrying capacity' and 'population-land balance', as they are used here. There is a very definite limit to the number of people any land area will support in perpetuity, if the population obtains its food only from within that area. This limit is fixed by certain natural characteristics of soil and

* *The Soils, Vegetation and Agricultural Systems of North Western Rhodesia*, Lusaka: Government Printer, 15*s*. *The Soil, Vegetation and Agricultural Systems of North Eastern Rhodesia*, Lusaka: Government Printer, 5*s*.

6:Rattray E,G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

PREFACE BY THE REV. ALEXANDER HETHERWICK, D.D.

THE author of the following book has been for some years located among the Nyanja-speaking tribes of British Central Africa at Blantyre, and afterwards in Central Angoniland. His occupation as a member of the African Lakes Corporation has brought him into close contact with the native population of these districts. He has taken advantage of his opportunities to familiarize himself with the native language, of which he has acquired a very competent knowledge. In the course of his studies he made a collection of native folk-lore and stories which illustrate in the fullest degree the various constructions, idioms and grammatical forms of the language. These he has now published with the coöperation of the Directors of the Corporation.

The book is of value as containing examples of native life, habits and customs which are rapidly disappearing from the country before the advance of civilization and the work of Christian missions. The coming generation of natives will grow up under new influences, and the habits of thought and belief that ruled the lives of their fathers will soon be forgotten. Collections of folk-lore such as this book contains are therefore invaluable for the light they throw on a state of native life that is rapidly passing away.

To get into the heart of the native mind is a task well-nigh impossible for a European. The nearest

6:Rattray E,G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR

In the study of this language, the student is fortunate in having two such scholarly works of reference as *A Practical Manual of the Nyanja Language*, by the Rev. A. Hetherwick, M.A., D.D., F.R.G.S., and *A Cyclopædic Dictionary of the Mang'anja Language*, by the Rev. D. C. Scott, M.A., D.D., F.R.S.G.S.; on the other hand, there is a striking want of any good prose work in that language. Of translations of the Bible, and other religious books, there are many, but all such works, in the translation, follow the English text almost literally, and contain so many words from foreign sources as to be of little use to the student who, having mastered the grammar and syntax of the language, seeks to enlarge his vocabulary and knowledge of idiomatic expression by reading some prose work. (The ideal translation of the Bible, or other religious work, would be one in which the English sentence is taken, the meaning got at, and this remodelled and transformed according to the native way of thought and expression.) It is to supply such a want that this little work is intended. The aim throughout has been, in the Chinyanja part, to write each sentence as a raw native would speak it. It is a commonly heard saying, that only boys trained at a Mission talk the language "grammatically." This is correct, if by "grammar" we mean a principle of set rules for the speaking of a language. For to the uncivilized native any such rules as those governing our own, and other languages of civilized countries,

TRADITION AND PRESTIGE AMONG THE NGONI

MARGARET READ

I. THE NGONI PEOPLE. Before I made my first camp in an Ngoni village, many Europeans had said to me, 'There are practically no Ngoni left to-day. They are all hopelessly mixed with other tribes. None of them keep to the Ngoni customs any longer. Their chiefs are no good.' From the doorway of my hut I saw people coming all day long to the Paramount Chief, behaving towards him with profound respect, bringing him presents, working for him. His children formed a special group in the village, easily recognizable by their bearing and their manners. Old *indunas*[1] came to instruct me, as they had instructed chiefs in their day, on the duties of a ruler, and the code of Ngoni laws. Old warriors in war dress came and danced by the cattle kraal and sang praise songs. Courts were held with scrupulous regard for order and justice. Other chiefs came visiting from distant parts with their retinues, and were received ceremonially. It soon became apparent that here was the centre of a political state, whose head was invested with prestige and authority over a wide area, and where behaviour to the Paramount and to every one else was strictly regulated by custom, and as strictly observed. These were Ngoni, and they and their fellow Ngoni in other areas[1] for the next ten months introduced me to the Ngoni people. The European assertion, that they no longer existed as a people, they laughed at, and proceeded to demonstrate that the contrary was true.

The Ngoni are found to-day scattered over four East African territories. The largest groups are in Nyasaland in the districts of Mzimba, Dowa, Fort Manning, Dedza, and Ncheu. In Northern Rhodesia they are in the Fort Jameson and Lundazi districts bordering on Nyasaland. Another section is in Portuguese East Africa on the South-West border of Nyasaland. Under other names there are Ngoni settlements in Tanganyika Territory. The present divisions of the Ngoni are due partly to European frontiers, partly to the fact that more than

[1] According to the census returns there are about 80,000 Ngoni in Northern Rhodesia and nearly 250,000 in Nyasaland, with other groups in Tanganyika Territory and Portuguese East Africa.

[1] [i.e., military leaders.—Analyst]

one party of them came up from the south, and partly to divisions among the Ngoni during the period of settlement.

About 115 years ago the ancestors of these Ngoni left their homes in the present Zululand and Swaziland for their long trek north. The immediate cause of their departure was the defeat of Zwidi, chief of the Ndwandwe people, by Chaka, the history of whose military career in Zululand is well known and needs no repetition here. As part of Zwidi's people, the Ngoni did not want to stay under Chaka, and the same impetus and military skill which set up Chaka as the Zulu Napoleon drove the Ngoni northward as far as Lake Tanganyika, a conquering military horde amassing followers on the way. To-day they are found in three large groups and several smaller ones, the large groups known as the 'countries' of Mpezeni, Mwambera, and Gomani, who are the Ngoni Paramount Chiefs.[1]

These groups of people with their southern origin, settled among people who had a totally different language and social structure, present to the anthropologist a highly complex situation to investigate. He must at the outset ask the questions, 'Who are these Ngoni? Have they a separate identity as a people, marked by distinctive social and political institutions?' After living among them for nearly a year I am convinced that it is correct to speak of the Ngoni as a distinctive group; that they themselves are very conscious of their separate identity as a people, and that they can point to certain of their institutions, notably their language and political, territorial, and kinship groupings, which are definitely Ngoni, that is, of southern origin, and which distinguish them from the people among whom they settled. The complexities of this situation involve the analysing of the ethnic elements included in this term 'Ngoni' and the determining of the sense in which it is to be used. They involve also an explanation of what is meant by the expression 'a distinctive Ngoni culture', or 'distinctive Ngoni institutions'. The anthropologist who is interested in culture contact must go further and indicate the nature of the double contact caused first by the intermingling of the Ngoni with other tribes, and then by the advent of the Europeans. It is not possible in this article to do justice to all these aspects of an intricate problem.

[1] For the purposes of this article these are the only groups which will be considered.

political and military organization into an effective group. What meaning, therefore, can we give to the term 'Ngoni', and how can this group which calls itself Ngoni be analysed into its component parts?

II. WHAT DOES THE TERM 'NGONI' MEAN? The references made hitherto show that the term 'Ngoni' is used in several different connotations. It is, strictly speaking, an historical linguistic term, and referred originally to that group of clans described as 'Nguni' because they spoke a language classified to-day as the Nguni dialects.[1] Somewhere on the march north the Ngoni changed the *u* to an *o*, and arrived in their present areas saying 'We are Ngoni'. They assert emphatically that it was on the march they began to say 'We are Ngoni', and they suggest that it was important to have some general term to cover individuals from many mixed groups.

The name Ngoni having been assumed on the march north, it obviously at first only covered those clans which were of true southern origin, or as we should say to-day, of Zulu or Swazi stock. This is the meaning which Ngoni still has when used in its narrow or strict sense to-day. In collecting the clan names in a village, for example, the headman says 'Those are Ngoni, those are Makalanga, those are Nsenga', and so on. The true Ngoni clans are those most highly honoured, the real aristocrats, and a little experience teaches the field worker to recognize their bearing as they walk about among the rest. In a village containing several clans, the houses of the Ngoni clans occupy the most honourable places in the middle of the horse-shoe formation surrounding the cattle kraal. In any meeting at a chief's village the men and women of Ngoni clans sit nearest to the chief and drink beer before the rest. This ranking by clans, however, does not stop at the true Ngoni. They lead the hierarchy, but other clans also claim precedence in a rough geographical order of the tribes absorbed from south to north. The true Ngoni illustrate this by saying, 'In old days the only men who were made *indunas* were those of the Swazi, Zulu, Suto, and Tonga clans. After we settled here, *indunas* were made from the Makalanga, Nsenga, and Sukuma clans'. There is therefore

[1] See *Bantu Studies*, Sept. 1934, for classification of the South African languages. Also A. T. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal*, for list of Nguni clans.

9: Read E-5 (1935) 1936 FR5 Ngoni FR5

down fully and correctly. When I arrived in Chief Gomani's country, after having stayed in the other two Ngoni areas, the chiefs and leading men whom he called to see me asked at once, 'What did the other Ngoni do to show you they were Ngoni? *We* want you first to hear the story of our people.' If I said to any older man of good standing, that is of a true Ngoni clan, 'Tell me about the Ngoni', he invariably began with the traditions of the south and their trek north.

I have some fifteen long texts[1] of Ngoni history, most of which begin with the stories of Dingiswayo and Zwidi leading up to the rise of Chaka and the Ngoni exodus from the south. These texts not only show a measure of agreement with each other, but they also are verifiable by established history as recorded by Europeans. Those texts which came from Gomani's country contain different material after the exodus from the south. For the Ngoni under the leadership of the Maseko clan came north with Mzilikazi and the Matabele, and crossing the Zambesi alone, went east of Lake Nyasa into Tanganyika.[2] The main Ngoni group under the Jere clan went west of Lake Nyasa into Tanganyika, and remained a united group until the death of Zwangendaba in 1848. A disputed succession followed and the Ngoni split up under two rival Paramounts, Mpezeni and Mwambera. The history of those years, as related to-day, is largely concerned with proving in each area that their Paramount is the only rightful one, the only one to whom the royal salute *Bayete* should be given. Mpezeni's historians say, 'Mwambera snatched *Bayete*'—and vice versa. In spite of these divergences in later history, however, the Ngoni point to their earlier history and say, 'You see we are all one people'. They are conscious of, and troubled about, their present divisions and inclined to attribute them to our premature arrival in the country. 'You came too soon. We would have fought until there was only one *inkosi*.'

The detailed knowledge of Ngoni history is regarded as the province of a specialist. 'How can a man of no wisdom remember all those names?' From time to time 'historians' tell episodes of this traditional history in the villages of the Paramount or of other im-

[1] 800–1,000 words.

[2] This is their own account and is confirmed by the Rev. Charles Stuart, formerly at Ekwendeni, but not so far recorded by other Europeans.

9: Read E-5 (1935) 1936 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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this they put the blame on the women. They point out that while they were on the march the local women they picked up, with their different language and customs, had not a great deal of influence on the community. Once they were settled, however, and married local women, those women went visiting to their own homes and took their children with them, and gradually a pronounced alien element and another language penetrated into Ngoni society. This is illustrated very well in the girls' initiation ceremonies, which differ very much in Ngoni and Chewa society. Ngoni men and women tell you with disgust how the *chinamwali*, the Chewa ceremony, began to be practised in Ngoni villages in place of the *umsindo* or *umgonxo* of the Ngoni. It was the only occasion on which I have heard them commend the action of the missionaries in putting down a custom, for they really despised the ceremonial and associations of the *chinamwali*, and rather than have it among them, they preferred outside help in putting it down.

The Ngoni dislike very much being asked point blank what cultural adjustments they made due to Chewa and other local customs. They admit reluctantly one or two minor adaptations, and proceed immediately to tell the major changes which they forced on the Chewa and others living under their rule. The chief adjustment by the Ngoni has undoubtedly been the adoption of the local language, as being the language of the women. Ngoni women of good family still speak Ngoni, but I have not found any instances of local women married to Ngoni men who have learned it. One of the perennial topics among the elders in an Ngoni village is the 'bad' influence of the women on the children. When pressed to explain the nature of this 'bad' influence, they say, 'The children are learning only the customs of the women. They cannot know about the Ngoni'. They lament the vanishing of the age-grades as the natural channels for instruction of young men in Ngoni customs, though they say with their characteristic realism, 'What is the good of having age grades and regiments when there is no war?'

If we were to attempt to reconstruct old Ngoni society as it was in the days before white contact, it is to this period, *chamtenderi*, we should turn. There we can find the structure of Ngoni society, the distinctive Ngoni institutions, and Ngoni supremacy over the surrounding tribes as a reality. When the first white people arrived, as

traders and missionaries and officials, they were all impressed with the power of the Ngoni Paramount Chief and the impossibility of getting any footing in the country without his consent and aid. 'Mpezeni[1] is a very powerful chief . . . and shows the greatest dislike to any interference with his governing powers. He has formed a powerful kingdom where his subjects are mainly Chewa, Chipeta and Senga stock, but his power is consolidated by a Zulu and half-Zulu aristocracy.' Such was the official view of the Ngoni state under old Mpezeni expressed by Sir Harry Johnston, and similar impressions are recorded of the Ngoni states in Nyasaland. If this was the European impression of Ngoni supremacy it is easy to picture the feelings of the Ngoni themselves with all their pride of race and of achievements in nation-holding, when for the first time a superior power loomed on their horizon.

VII. The Advent of the Europeans. I have up to the present referred to the three Ngoni areas as if they formed one cultural unit. This is true of their earliest days, and to a large extent of the time called *chamtendere*. In spite of certain minor differences there was then a form of society and of political organization which was the same in all three areas, and they all possessed the same language, traditions, and aristocratic hierarchy. After the advent of the Europeans, however, it becomes impossible to generalize, as both the manner and the results of white penetration varied so much in the three areas. As a study in culture contact where eye-witnesses, both white and black, are still available as informants, it is most illuminating to compare the effects of white contact in Mpezeni's and Mwambera's countries. In Mpezeni's the first contact was commercial, in Mwambera's, missionary. The contrast between Ngoni society in those two districts to-day is startling, and is commented on frequently by the Ngoni themselves. 'See', say Mpezeni's people, 'the Charterland Company came to us. To Mwambera's country it was Dr. Laws. And Dr. Laws's men can speak English to-day and we cannot. Our cattle were taken by the Europeans; Mwambera's were not. That is why they *lobola* their wives to-day with many cattle, and we have only a few cattle.' They often referred to these differences as soon as they knew I was going from

[1] This was the old Mpezeni, son of Zwangendaba.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
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Mpezeni

THE FORT JAMESON NGONI

By J. A. BARNES

Historical and Ecological Background

101 THERE are about a dozen groups of peoples in different parts of Africa who call themselves Ngoni, and others not using that name have also been classified as Ngoni on the basis of common [131] origin. They are found in Tanganyika Territory, Portuguese East Africa, Nyasaland, and Northern Rhodesia. The name Ngoni is derived from Nguni, the designation applied to themselves by the Zulu and Xhosa peoples. The Ngoni have a common history of emigration from 175 the vicinity of Zululand, in Natal, in the 1820's, and of subsequent 101 migration northwards. This common heritage they share with the Ndebele of Southern Rhodesia. These migrations were occasioned by the rise to power of the Zulu chief Shaka, whose defeat of his chief rival, Zwide of the Ndandwe, led to the flight northwards of parties of Ndandwe refugees. At least two parties travelled as far north as the River Zambezi, one of them led by Zwangendaba, whose party crossed the river in 1835.[1] This Ngoni group reached the vicinity of Lake Tanganyika in about 1845, and there Zwangendaba died. His people split into several segments, led by his sons and other followers. One of these segments went on farther north, others turned towards Lake Nyasa, while one segment led by Mpezeni, a son of Zwangendaba, struck south-westwards towards the Bemba country in what is now the Northern Province of Northern Rhodesia. Here, in about 1856, they fought unsuccessfully with the Bemba, retreated southwards, and in about 1865 crossed the River Luangwa into Fort Jameson District. In 1868 they moved westwards into Petauke District, and a few years later moved eastwards to their present habitat in the vicinity of Fort Jameson.[2] It is with this group of Ngoni that we are concerned.[3]

[1] Poole, *Dawn of the Crossing of the Zambezi*, pp. 190-2.

[2] Cf. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal*, pp. 659-70; Chilembwe, *My Ngoni of Nyasaland*, pp. 1-36; Doyle, *Three Years in Savage Africa*, p. 151; Elmslie, *Among the Wild Angoni*, p. 18; Fraser, *Winning a Primitive People*, pp. 310-13; Hodgson, *Notes on the Ankoma and Angoni*, p. 103; Kapumbi, *Angoni, Utisoko ndi Miyambi*, pp. 1-115; Laurence, *Tumbuka Chronology*, p. 86; Poole, *Native Tribes*, pp. 3-10; Read, *Tradition and Prestige*, p. 464; Stigand, *Natives of Nyasaland*, p. 126; Werner, *Natives of British Central Africa*, p. 182; Wilson, *Gumbukwa . . . der Angoni*, pp. 181-6; Winterbottom, *Angoni Paramountcy*, pp. 116-71; Young, *History of the Tumbuka-Kamanga*, pp. 116-17.

[3] I worked among these people for a year in 1946-7 as an Assistant Anthropologist of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute.

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